

OLD!

THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO CLASSIC GAMES

NINTENDO'S HIDDEN GEMS

THE BEST GAMES TO PLAY ON THE FAMICOM DISK SYSTEM

retro* GAMER



ALSO INSIDE

MYTH: HISTORY IN THE MAKING
ODD WORLD SERIES | BEAGLE RACER
COLIN PORCH | THE YOUNG ONES

AMSTRAD | COMMODORE | SEGA | NINTENDO | ATARI | SINCLAIR | NEO GEO | SONY | COIN-OP | MOBILE



EVOLUTION OF BEAT-'EM-UPS

KEY JAPANESE DEVELOPERS DISCUSS THE HISTORY BEHIND THE POPULAR GENRE

ACCESS SOFTWARE

THE DEVELOPER THAT RAIDED MOSCOW AND SCORED A HOLE-IN-ONE



HOW BEAM SOFTWARE HACKED THE SNES TO CREATE A CYBERPUNK CLASSIC

25 GAME ICONS

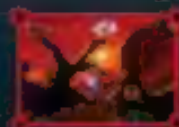
FROM MINER WILLY TO MARIO: YOUR VIDEOGAME HEROES CELEBRATED

FEATURED INSIDE THIS ISSUE:



THE SIMS

HOW WILL WRIGHT CREATED THE PC'S BIGGEST FRANCHISE



EARTHWORM JIM

DOUG TENNAPEL AND DAVE PERRY DISCUSS SHINY ENTERTAINMENT'S 16-BIT CELEBRITY



Digital Edition

GreatDigitalMags.com

ISSUE 120

THE UK'S BIGGEST MODERN POPULAR CULTURE SHOWS

MCM LONDON COMIC CON

euro **cosplay** 2013 championships

25th-27th October 2013
ExCeL London

BUY PRIORITY ENTRY TICKETS IN ADVANCE NOW!

MCM BIRMINGHAM COMIC CON

23rd-24th November 2013 - NEC Birmingham

f t **MCMEXPO**

KIDS GO FREE*

General entry 11am.

Children 10 and under enter free with a paying adult.
Max 2 children per adult. Does NOT apply to early entry.

WWW.MCMCOMICCON.COM

Part of MCM EXPO GROUP

Comics

Manga

Anime

Movies

Gosplay

Video Games

THE RETRODATES BY VALENTI VOISARDI (C)



DARRAN JONES
It's clearly Strider. He evades a catfish that other videogame boxes can only dream of having. Have I ever said how much I like him?
Expertise: Juggling a beautiful wife, two gorgeous girls and an award-winning magazine.
Currently playing: Castlevania: Lords Of Shadow Ultimate Edition
Favourite game of all time: Strider



PAUL DRURY
Ultia from Space Channel 5. What's she doing, I will follow...
Expertise: Anti-acid pop.
Currently playing: Justice Movers
Favourite game of all time: Strider in Space



PAUL DAVIES
I'll have to say Master Chief because of all that badass butt... and of course all the Halo games look awf.
Expertise: Banging my head against a brick wall.
Currently playing: Halo 4
Favourite game of all time: Grease TV Ghosts



JASON KELK
I like our characters to Bob and Bob both being to-ming - please don't make me choose just one!
Expertise: Being a footballer here.
Currently playing: Windows (Alan 8 bit)
Favourite game of all time: ID



IAIN LEE
John Stryker from Strider Run - tough, badass and a little bit slow. My kind of guy.
Expertise: Pretending to be an American on Xbox Live.
Currently playing: Halo 4
Favourite game of all time: Like the BBC's version



DAVID CROOKES
Dina from Uncharted because I'm not like that. She was cool though.
Expertise: All things Arsenal CPC, Dina, Alan Lyons.
Currently playing: Grand Theft Auto: St.
Favourite game of all time: Dragon Sword



MARTYN CARROLL
Got to be Matt. Of the 60 best games ever made, he's in about half of them!
Expertise: I be stuff.
Currently playing: Windows: A Tale Of Two Sons
Favourite game of all time: Jet Set Willy

LOADING



've played a lot of remakes lately, partly for my job and partly for my own personal enjoyment (who am I kidding? They're the same thing). Reading numerous reviews of games like *Shadowrun Returns*, *DuckTales Remastered*, *Dungeons & Dragons: Chronicles Of Mystara* and *Flashback HD* and seeing comments on the incoming *Strider* made me realise that developers are continually caught between a rock and a hard place when tackling these games. And let's not even mention the poor developers who get saddled with each new Sonic game.

It appears that everyone wants something different from these updates/remakes. Some want completely overhauled mechanics; others want brand new visuals, while some want the original games to be included, or have the game stick slavishly to the original version. How on earth do you keep such a diverse selection happy? While I don't create updates of games, I do deal with an eclectic audience, so I know the difficulties faced in trying to please everybody.

Having said that, I'm as vocal as anyone and I've already got a list of demands for the new *Strider* game that are as long as my arm that I'm sure won't appear. But as a gamer, I'm at least grateful that publishers are revisiting these classics, even if I occasionally end up disappointed.

Enjoy the magazine,

LOADING



pdfmagazines www.pdfmagazines.org

CONTENTS



>> Load 120 Breathing new life into classic games

imagineshop.co.uk

You can now order *Retro Gamer* and any of your other favourite Imagine titles from our online eShop. Don't delay, make sure you get your order today. Head over to www.imagineshop.co.uk



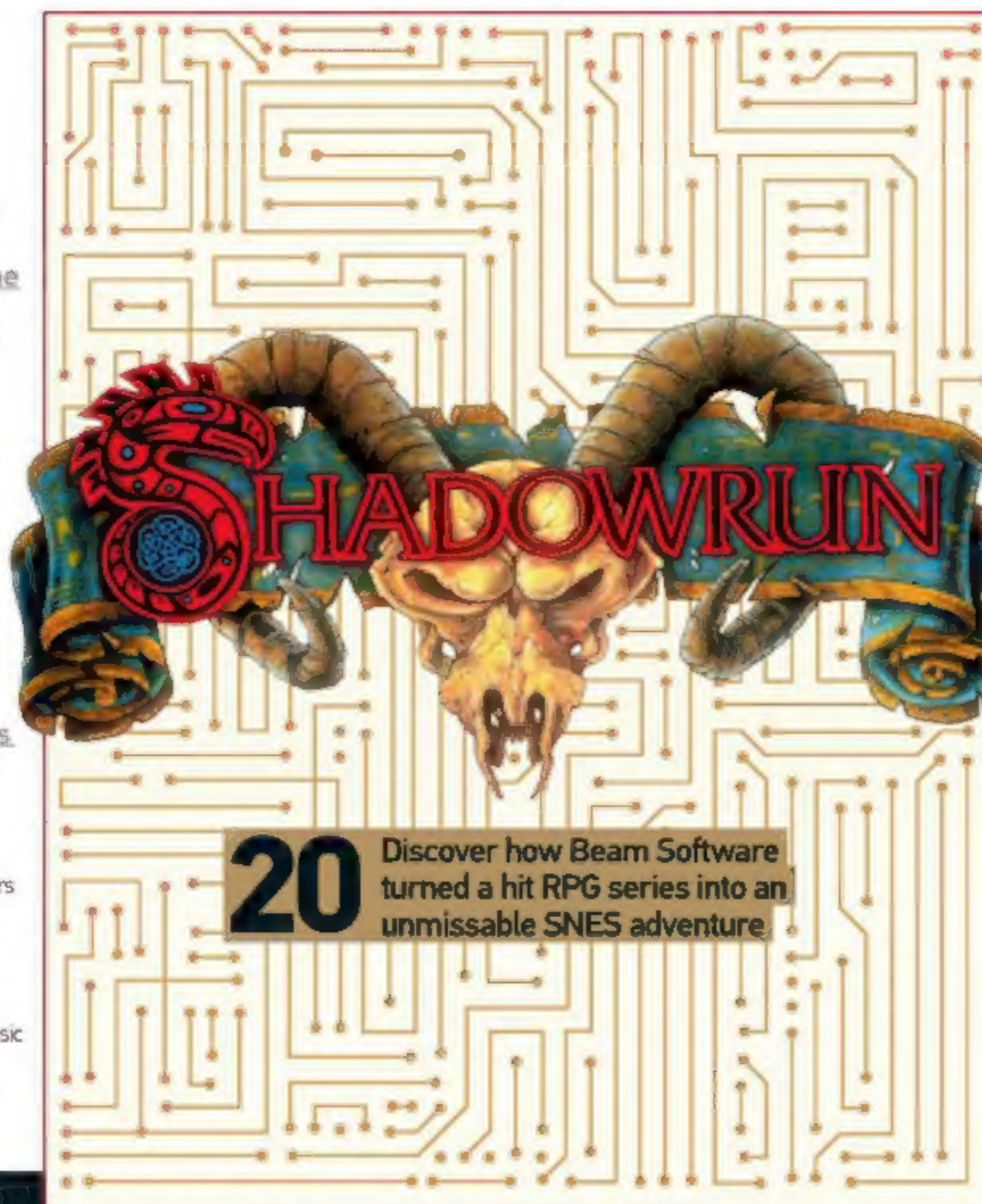
Subscribe here!
AND SAVE 30%

Don't get hacked off. Buy a sub. Subscribe at www.imaginesubs.co.uk



FEATURED

- 28** **The Story Of Earthworm Jim**
Doug TenNapel and David Perry discuss Shiny's 16-bit hero
- 36** **Import Only Kaeru No Tame Ni Kane Wa Naru**
You'll be hopping mad if you miss out on this superb Game Boy exclusive
- 38** **The Making Of Myth: History In The Making**
The history behind System 3's 8-bit epic
- 44** **Minority Report Special Famicom Disk System**
Essential games to play on Nintendo's obscure Japanese peripheral
- 58** **From The Archives Access Software**
The story of the software house that helped define 8-bit war and golf games
- 64** **Classic Moments Star Wars**
We relive the greatest scenes from Atari Inc's superb arcade game
- 76** **The Evolution Of Beat-'Em-Ups**
Archer MacLean and other top developers chart the evolution of the popular genre
- 84** **Classic Moments The Legend Of Zelda: A Link To The Past**
The very best bits from Link's SNES classic
- 90** **The Unconverted**
Rory Milne digs up more classic arcade games that never reached the home



20 Discover how Beam Software turned a hit RPG series into an unmissable SNES adventure

“A high point in sandbox-based game design”

Samuel Roberts

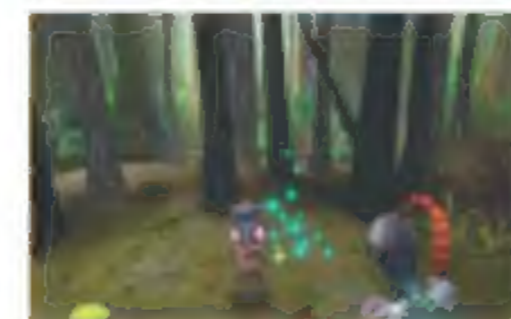


74 Future Classic

Samuel Roberts explains how Rockstar got so much right with the magnificent *Red Dead Redemption*

86 The Sims

Will Wright recalls the origins of the PC's biggest franchise



48 Your Videogame Icons

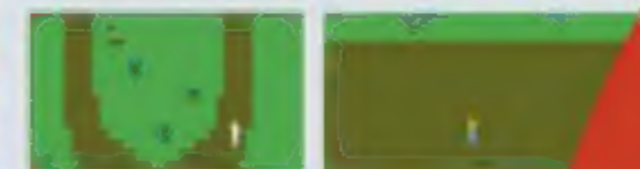
We reveal the most iconic gaming heroes of all time, as voted by you

66 Oddworld

Lorne Lanning and Stewart Gilray on Abe's past and HD future

18 CHUCK NORRIS SUPERKICKS

Regular reader Bill Matthews explains why this Atari 2600 title is one of the worst games ever.



ESSENTIALS

- | | | | |
|----|--------------------------------------|-----|--------------------------------------|
| 6 | RetroRadar | 16 | Back To The Nineties |
| 8 | Iain Lee | 42 | Subs |
| 12 | Paul Davies | 104 | Homebrew |
| 13 | Retro Diary | 108 | Letters |
| 14 | Back To The Eighties | 114 | End/Game |

RETRO RATED



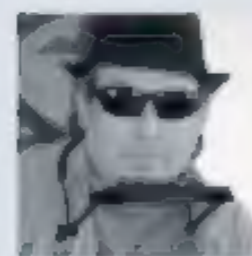
- | | | | |
|-----|--------------------------------------|-----|---|
| 100 | Shadowrun Returns | 102 | Worms 3 |
| 102 | EarthBound | 102 | Castlevania: Lords Of Shadow Ultimate Edition |
| 102 | DuckTales Remastered | 102 | Flashback |
| 102 | Pac-Man Dash | | |



RETRO REVIVALS

- 56** **The Apprentice**
No, nothing about Alan Sugar, but the sad tale of the very first game Darran bought
- 72** **The Young Ones**
Discover why this limp adaptation of the popular TV show failed to capture its anarchy
- 98** **Rage Racer**
Marty Carroll explains why Namco's hit racer gives him a *Stunt Car Racer* vibe

In the hot seat this month...



26 BURKE TRIESCHMANN
The composer of *The Horde*, *Pandemonium!* and *Total Eclipse* explains his love of music and how it led to a career in videogames.



92 COLIN PORCH
He was there at the collapse of Imagine Software, started creating games in his thirties and coded some superb conversions for the Commodore 64. We discover what makes Colin tick.

Get online now!
Visit the Retro Gamer website and upload your very own classic profiles
www.retrogamer.net



» GIVE US TWO MINUTES AND WE'LL GIVE YOU THE RETRO WORLD



» We kick off this month's news with a world exclusive interview on

Capcom's new *Strider* game. We also speak to Ste Pickford about the return of Plok and look at the numerous HD updates and sequels heading your way. Enjoy...

* CONTENTS

4 RESURRECTING STRIDER

We talk to producer James Vance about his exciting plans for Capcom's new *Strider* game

8 IAIN LEE

Iain reveals the dangers of leaving it too late to jump onto the next console bandwagon

10 NEWS WALL

Ste Pickford talks Plok, *Levi's* gets immortalised in *Quake*, while *Soul Calibur II* gets a sparkling new HD update

12 PAUL DAVIES

The editor of *ESM* explains why imagines will always win out over the internet

13 DIARY

All the news for the current month, both the best as well as the worst



RESURRECTING STRIDER

JAMES VANCE TALKS EXCLUSIVELY ABOUT STRIDER'S RETURN

Strider was a revelation when it was released in 1988, delivering spectacular boss fights, imaginative level design and the greatest second level in the history of videogames.

Despite this brilliance, *Strider* only received one official sequel, and while he's appeared in countless cameo roles throughout the years, he's never been able to secure a further sequel – until now. James Vance, *Strider*'s producer, explains why the time is right for the iconic ninja to make his comeback.

So is *Strider* a reboot or a brand new game?

Strider is a brand new game. It takes place within the *Strider* universe and is a re-imagining of the hero *Strider*

Hiryu's confrontation with the evil world dictator Grand Master Meo.

How did you get the job of creating *Strider*?

The original *Strider* on the Sega Mega Drive left a huge impression on me as a child and has remained one of my all-time favourite games. During my initial job interview at Capcom I was asked which Capcom franchises I would like to work on. I responded with *Okami*, *Resident Evil* and *Strider*. To my surprise, not long after I was hired I was assigned to this *Strider* project, which at that time was at the initial stage of pre-production. I then worked with Andrew Szymanski, the senior producer, key Osaka staff and Double Helix Games to create a game concept that, as *Strider* fans, we felt passionate about and that also guaranteed

core gameplay, graphic and design elements that would appeal to both long-time fans and series newcomers.

Can we expect to see any enemies from the original game return?

Yes. This new *Strider* takes place in the same *Strider* universe as the previous titles, and we are very proactive in paying respect to enemies and other elements from previous games wherever they benefit the design and can provide a unique and engaging experience. At San Diego Comic-Con 2013 we revealed the Kazakh troopers, flying robots as well as a re-imagining of the Ouroboros character from previous *Strider* games. These are just a few of the familiar characters who, along with a new cast of unique characters, will make an appearance in the game.



How are you handling the pressure from *Strider*'s many fans?

I've been a *Strider* fan since I was a child, so the main pressure to deliver a compelling and entertaining *Strider* experience comes from me. More than anything I am excited to be working on a time-honoured game with such a passionate fan following.

What new enhancements are you adding to the reboot?

The philosophy from the beginning was not to take away, but to always add to the core *Strider* experience. Hiryu begins the game as strong and as agile as in *Strider* and *Strider II*, and his abilities continue to expand across the course of the entire game. We have already revealed two plasma cypher augmentations, and have a vast array of new items and abilities for the player to discover and enjoy.

Item and ability acquisition also play into the vastly expanded size and scope of the game world. Whereas previous titles were relatively linear affairs, *Strider* features a massive, completely interconnected game world. It is through the exploration of this game world that players will discover and unlock their newfound abilities.

Finally, current and next generation hardware allows us to realise a beautiful and detailed game world

using high-end graphic technologies and modern rendering techniques.

How long have you been working on the reboot of *Strider* and what's been the hardest thing you've encountered from a gameplay point of view?

I've been working on *Strider* for roughly 18 months. The most challenging gameplay element has been designing the interconnected game map for Hiryu's extremely quick and agile character. Creating logical pathways, obstacles and challenges for the player, when they can basically go anywhere and climb on anything has been a challenge. However, because we felt so strongly about delivering a large interconnected game world, we embraced this challenge from the offset and are confident players will enjoy the final product.

We know Ikuo isn't involved, but are there any people from *Strider II* helping out?

Yes. Osaka based staff who worked on *Strider II* have been instrumental in shaping and contributing to the visual look and game design to ensure this new *Strider* remains true to the *Strider* universe, and at the same time delivers a genuine Capcom experience. The Capcom Osaka team art director

RETROADAR: RESURRECTING STRIDER



» From the forum: Readers weigh in on *Strider*

VISIT RETROGAMER.NET/FORUM TO HAVE YOUR SAY

"Never been a fan of the original *Striders*. Too glitchy to look good. Really looking forward to *Castle of Illusion* remake the most!" *canham81*

"I'm very much looking forward to this! I'm feeling confident already that this will be better than the absolutely tripe *Strider II* (Mega Drive). Never has a sequel let me down has much as that did!" *ArchaidKode*

"Years ago I played MAME – every single game – and concluded *Strider* was the best arcade game ever, and this was before I'd picked up *Retro Gamer*. So yes, I am excited, *Strider* is just something else in my opinion. Having said that... I hope they don't muck it up!" *nick1*

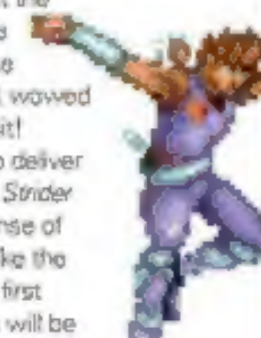
who designed the majority of the characters in this new *Strider* – including Hiryu – was also the lead character designer for *Strider II*.

Why do you think the original *Strider* remains so popular among the gaming community?

There are a variety of reasons. For me, at the time it was the unprecedented freedom of movement and high-speed action that the game offered. There really were no other titles which allowed the player to move both horizontally and vertically, run up and down sloped surfaces and climb on any surface, all the while engaging the enemy in combat. The graphics, which featured detailed and extremely unique designs, were also amazing.

The original *Strider* came at the transition from the 8-bit to the 16-bit generation, and was the first home console game that wowed the world with power of 16-bit!

We've worked very hard to deliver and expand upon *Strider* and *Strider II*'s high-speed action and sense of freedom, and hope that just like the original we will be one of the first games next generation users will be proud to add to their collection.



"(Xbox 360) It certainly needs a little more colour, but the team has nailed *Strider*'s cool look."

What We Want From Capcom's reboot

» How Double Helix Games can make its new *Strider* game even better

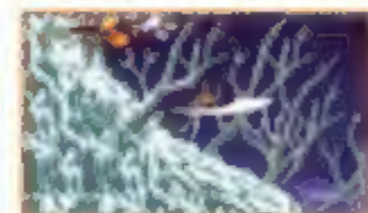
Mecha Pen

Strider has some of the most imaginative bosses around, and Mecha Pen is easily one of our favourites. He's essentially a gigantic gorilla who is not afraid to pound *Strider* into the ground if he gets too close to him. Double Helix Games is being a little cagey about whether he's going to appear, but you can't really imagine a *Strider* game without him.



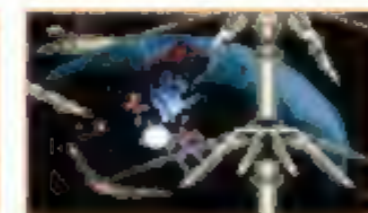
Spectacle

Strider has the greatest second level of any videogame ever made. This is fact. As a result, we're expecting Double Helix Games to somehow top this momentous piece of level design when *Strider* gets released next year. It seems unlikely based on the continuous world it's trying to create, but that won't stop us sadly wishing for it like the fanboys we are.



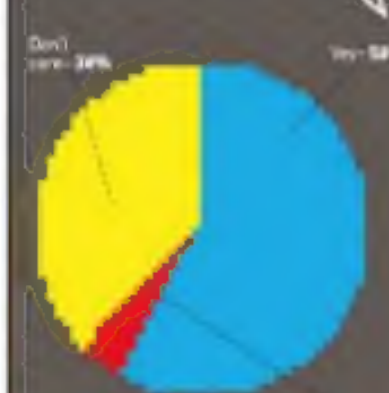
Unlockables

Everyone likes free stuff, so why not include both *Strider* and *Strider II* as unlockables upon completing the game. We can't imagine they would be that hard to include and it would save us a fortune, as we could ignore the ridiculously expensive PlayStation PAL version that leaves climbing in price. Curio on guys, you know it makes sense.



A sequel

Yes we're jumping the gun, but we want a sequel. In fact we don't want a sequel, but a complete remake of the original game. Way forward probably isn't busy now *Duck Tales Remastered* is finished, so give the developer a big sack of cash and let its amazing artists run rampant. We can only imagine how amazing an HD, 2D remake would look.



Here's the bit...

Iain Lee has been a fervent gamer since he was tiny. And that was a long time ago. In between playing computer games and collecting trees from eBay, he has presented Channel 4's *The 11 O'Clock Show* and *Rise*, and currently does bits of stand-up as well as presenting the 2-hour long *Late Night Radio Show* on Absolute Radio at 11pm.

Hi there, my name's **Iain Lee**. You might remember me from *Thumb Bandits*, *The 11 O'Clock Show* and *Absolute Radio*, but now I'm here to confess my love for retro



Ouch! That Hurt

What's the worst moment in your gaming history? For me it was probably when I made the decision to buy my first PlayStation. I had been so blown away by my friend's Sega Saturn that I knew I had to get back into games in a big way. I trawled all over London (I didn't have the internet then! How mental is that?) going into various stores asking whether I should get a Saturn or a PlayStation. I did not want to f*** up like my dad did in the Eighties when we ended up getting a Betamax video. And to be honest, that was what was putting me off getting a PlayStation – the fact that Sony had let me down so badly in the past resulting in actual physical injury as I constantly got my face pummelled by the rough and common VHS owners.

I eventually settled on the PlayStation. It was tough, but most of the evidence was indicating that the Saturn was possibly already on the turn

and there was a massive supply of games for Sony's wonder machine.

The thing is, at the time I had just left college, had no work, was signing on and was skint. Absolutely broke. I think the PlayStation was around £400. A lot of money, but I just had to have one. I knew that, somehow, this machine was important to me and that my life would be tied to it and gaming in one way or another. All right, I didn't get that spiritual feeling. I just wanted to play *WipEout*.

Once I'd made the choice, I then had to find the best deal. I think I ended up getting it from Dixons, which was offering some free games with it. I did something I had never done before and bought it on the never never. There was no way I could pay for it outright and I couldn't ask my mum for the money! She would be furious. I finally went in, determined to make this life changing purchase...

Got it, took it home and played the shit out of it. As well as *WipEout* I also got some game where you were a jumping rabbit and had to, you know, jump and stuff. I think you jumped onto clouds. I don't remember. I remember even less of the third game I got which was pony. But I didn't care. I had my console and I was happy.

That changed 7 days later.

Literally a week to the day I walked past the same shop I had made this extravagant purchase from. I could not believe my eyes. The expensive bundle that had cost me £400 was reduced to an earth-shatteringly low £259. Shit. That hurt. I felt betrayed and stupid. Why had I jumped into this so recklessly? I hadn't. I'd spent three months weighing it all up, but still...

We've all been there, spent more money than we should've, felt betrayed by a decision a company made... but I guess that's part of the romance of videogames.



© IAIN LEE

*PlayStation photography courtesy of Evan Aron

THE WORLD'S BEST SCI-FI MAGAZINE

WWW.SCIFINOW.CO.UK



SciFiNow

Available from all good newsagents and supermarkets

ON SALE NOW

Agents Of Shield • Superman Vs Batman • The Amazing Spider-Man 2 • Riddick • The X-Files



BUY YOUR ISSUE TODAY

Print edition available at www.imagineshop.co.uk
 Digital edition available at www.greatdigitalmags.com



facebook.com/SciFiNow twitter.com/SciFiNow

EVERYTHING THAT'S BEEN HAPPENING IN THE WORLD OF RETRO THIS MONTH



Jon and Ste Pickford pose for a publicity shot of the rather wasteful Megawatt Awards. Ste is holding a large blue award.

Ste Pickford poses for the first time in his own Super Nintendo game back in 1993.

PLOK RETURNS

STE PICKFORD ON PLOK'S COMIC COMEBACK

It's been a while since the Pickford brothers' limb-flinging platform hero buzz-sawed into action on the Super Nintendo and, despite a cameo 'boss' appearance in Super Fighter Team's Lynx shooter *Zaku* a few years ago, we've missed the cute little hoodie's

flag-hunting antics. However, we can happily inform you that Plok is back in his own regular online comic-strip, *Plok The Exploding Man*, written and created by the Pickfords themselves. We asked Ste Pickford to spill the beans on Plok's

new career as a comic character, and why the brothers decided the time was right for his return.

"Partly, it was a response to the constant requests we get for a re-release of Plok on Virtual Console/3DS, or for a sequel," Ste explains. "But, mainly, I think we just wanted to do something with Plok. He's got a lot of fans, and he's a character we are proud of creating. We felt that we should be making more use of him, and a comic strip seemed like the quickest way of bringing him back."

"We thought doing a comic in our spare time would also be a nice way to put something out there more regularly so we'd get the satisfaction of 'completing' something on a more regular basis than once every couple of years, and also get some regular feedback. Our plan is to publish a new strip each time we finish drawing a new one, so I'm hoping that's about one a week."

Ste seems pleased with the reaction to the project (three comic strips have been posted as we go to press.) "It's been great fun getting in touch with Plok fans out there, and

RETRO GAMER COASTERS OUT NOW

Fans of Retro Gamer will love our excellent coasters. Available in packs of four, they feature some of our best covers from the past 100 issues and are the perfect accompaniment to our excellent Retro Gamer mugs. Featuring high quality prints and a strong cork backing, they're coated with a lovely gloss finish...making them extremely durable. A pack of four costs just £4.99, so order a set from www.imagineshop.co.uk



hearing all their stories about how Plok affected their childhood and how they'd curse at how hard it was," he chuckles. "I was worried people would say 'is that it?' when they saw a little four-panel comic strip, but it's all been really positive so far." So with all this new-found attention for the explosively-volatile little fella, what about a new Plok game then Ste? "No comment!" he laughs. Still, according to the Pickfords' website "anything is possible..." But for now, catch up with Plok's new comic-style adventures at www.zee-3.com/plok.

THE SOUL STILL BURNS

SOULCALIBUR II GETS HD UPDATE

Namco Bandai has announced that a new HD update of *SoulCalibur II*, with full online multiplayer support, is on its way for Xbox 360 and PS3. The re-release is set for some time this autumn to tie in with the tenth anniversary of the classic weapon-based brawler. Namco is promising "vibrant updated graphics" and an "online infrastructure featuring brand new netcode overseen by the Project Soul team", which leads us to believe that it will be much better than the simplified port of *SoulCalibur* previously released on Xbox Live. As we have fond memories of wacking Darran around the head with a lethal-looking flail thingy as the saucy Ivy Valentine on the PS2 version, we're looking forward to doing it all over again in pin-sharp resolution.



Xbox SoulCalibur II looked fantastic on last-gen consoles, so now it should look amazing.

LETS GO!

LEMMINGS IMMORTALIZED IN BRONZE

A new sculpture commemorating DMA Design's *Lemmings* has been unveiled in Dundee, close to the company's former headquarters. Created by sculptor and *Lemmings* fan Alyson Conway, the artwork was commissioned by the city's council in partnership with Scottish Enterprise. It joins existing tributes to Dundee's culture - sculptures of Desperate Dan and Minnie the Mink of *The Dandy* and Beano comic fame. "I completed *Lemmings* and its follow-up back in the day, so I feel I know them pretty well," stated Alyson in Dundee's *The Courier*. "The game was created at the bottom of Perth Road, so my idea was that the *Lemmings* come wandering up the road to the new steps at Seabraes."

Lemmings was a massive hit for the Scottish developer back in 1991, selling over 16 million copies on multiple platforms, including an impressive 55,000 units on its release day alone. From what we hear the work has already caused quite a stir among the local populace - and also around the world - among fans of the survival-averse mop-topped characters. The sculpture is a wonderful symbol and a nod to Dundee's rich history of game design, and we're hoping this could be the start of a movement to celebrate more British gaming icons in similar style. What about a statue of Sabroman in Twycross town centre? Or a six-foot Miner Willy on Liverpool's historic waterfront? The possibilities are endless!



Alyson Conway poses with her *Lemmings* sculpture of Seabraes, Dundee.

Amazing titles on greatdigitalmags.com

All About Space

In Issue 10 of *All About Space*, we're looking at the technology and mission goals of the James Webb Space Telescope, one of the most exciting and ambitious projects of the decade. We're also exploring the deadly potential of the Solar System's Killer Comets.

games™

The new issue of *games™* has a complete guide to *Risk*, from its early NES days to contemporary modern Xbox titles, as well as an examination of which next-gen games will permanently affect the landscape of game design. There's also an interview with Gary Bracey on the glory days of *Ocean*.

How It Works

This month's *How It Works* powers up an electrifying special feature on energy, from what it is, to how it is formed and onto why it can be used to power many of our things on Earth. In addition we have a bombastic feature on battleship weaponry, a fantastic feature on fossils and a huge article on the world's biggest animals.

Apps Magazine

The console series *Apps* migrates to mobile this issue, with a review of the original sequel *The Fall* plus *Sky Gamblers: Cold War* and more games for iPhone, iPad and Android. We also compile the definitive list of essential apps for everything from social networking to shopping.

Learn more about greatdigitalmags.com

Imagine Publishing's *greatdigitalmags.com* is an even easier, fully searchable magazine site. *Rare Game*, *Sci-Fi Now* and *How It Works*. *greatdigitalmags.com* is an innovative new digital platform offers access to every magazine in the Imagine Publishing portfolio. Regardless of your interests, you'll discover plenty of titles to suit your needs. Giving you instant access to Zine and iTunes versions of your favourite magazines, this means that getting the latest issue has never been easier. Head to greatdigitalmags.com now.

LARA'S BACK

NEW TOMB RAIDER CONFIRMED

Square Enix have confirmed that a next-gen *Tomb Raider* game is in the works, following the recent reboot of the franchise that has now sold in excess of 3 million copies. The company's European and North American CEO, Phil Rogers, hinted that the new title might be linked to an upcoming Dark Horse comic book series, which would bridge the gap between the two game instalments, while comic series writer Gall Simone confirmed this would be the case in an interview with Kotaku.

We're really please with this recent announcement, as *Tomb Raider*, while far from perfect, was a cracking adventure that helped make Lara more relevant to today's gamers. Here's hoping that the sequel focuses

more on the survival aspects that were a little undercooked. We'd like to see a bigger focus on actual tomb raiding as well. Just keep Rhianna Pratchett involved.



Lara Croft's adventures are now back to its new Tomb Raider game.

Here's my bio...
 In 1992 I started out on Mean Machines Sega and Nintendo Magazine System. In 1995 I became editor of C&VG. I had the C&VG website from 1998 until Christmas 2000. Then I left journalism to be concept design manager at Criterion Games. I returned to journalism in 2003 and from 2005 I've been running my own company, Unlikely Hero.

Hello, retro gamers. My name is **Paul Davies**. I used to be the editor of C&VG and have also worked on a number of classic gaming magazines over the years

Retro Reading Rocks

Magazines are better gaming companions than websites, I'm now sure of it. The spirit of Zzap!64, Mean Machines and old-school C&VG burned brightest of all because they were on the printed page.

Before I stride ahead and discover that this sweet-smelling meadow before me is in fact a sea of forum snipers, I should point out that this isn't about quality over quantity. Nor is it about how hard it was to share your written opinion/ expertise with fellow gamers "when I were a lad". None of that Monty Python 'Four Yorkshiremen' one-upmanship, I promise. There is, however, an element of pining for the old days – but I think that's okay inside of **Retro Gamer**.

The potential for games mags to inspire passion for a new and developing scene was (and still is) because of, rather than in spite of, limitations: a fixed number of pages at a team's disposal and on each one a restricted amount of space to cram with fresh enthusiasm; an immovable deadline to hit each month and a constant clock-wicking pressure to make everything count.

Physical restrictions of printed publications force editorial teams to make brave calls regarding the games and gaming features that are included. Most visible of all, the cover story counts for so much – not only, ideally, promising an exclusive inside track on the hottest thing around, but doing so in a way that conveys the attitude of everything else found inside.

What I've always found to be the fun part about games magazines is that what you do find inside often bears no resemblance to other lifestyle publications, with templates tossed out of the window to encapsulate the nature of the experience unique to each game. C&VG's *Mario 64*, *NIGHTS* and *Panzer Dragoon* pages were personal highlights – *Haynes Repair Manual* meets magical kingdoms. You won't see any such artistic exploration on a website because page-elements are stuck to a grid.

One last sign of the times that influenced how magazines came together throughout the Eighties and Nineties was the culture of working together in an office, whereas now it's not only website teams that work remotely (from home). A bunch of lads

and lasses serving time on impossible schedules for months or years on end became as tight-knit as a sports team, sharing the creative spark of a rock band while observing the regimented realities of a military unit. A chap who I enjoy chatting to on Twitter (Steve Turner, @gamesbloke) recently pointed out that "there was a period of time in the early to mid-Nineties where you had writers that you wanted to be mates with. That's gone now." Great mags were/are the voices of those teams, thrilled to be in their privileged position to share.

Finally the secret sauce, overlooked, undervalued and all-but-outmoded today, is the anticipation associated with a new issue balanced with the length of time that it satisfies such expectation. For example, *Edge* maintains a degree of mystique to this day – even with so much information widely available online – teasing us with its timeless Next Month pages.

On a good month, magazines drip-feed a perfect snapshot of where our attention is best focussed – a memorable guide to what's important from a team that you've grown to love over time... kind of like **Retro Gamer**.



13 September – 10 October

retrodiary

» A month of retro events both past and present

 <p>17 September 1993 The first 32-bit console released in Europe appears, the Amiga CD32. It is also the first to be discontinued...</p>	 <p>17 September 2013 Rockstar Games' holy anticipated <i>Grand Theft Auto V</i> is due for release on PS3 and Xbox 360.</p>	 <p>20 September 1992 The arcade coin-op <i>Blue's Ark</i>, designed by Ashby, is released by Jaleco.</p>	 <p>23 September 1993 Sonic the Hedgehog stars in <i>Sonic CD</i> on the Sega Mega-CD, released first in Japan.</p>
 <p>27 September 1985 Namco releases the classic game <i>Maze</i>, in which you must bump your enemies off the playfield. It's essentially <i>Jedgers</i> in space.</p>	 <p>04 September 2002 Microsoft acquires the videogames developer Rare Ltd, formerly known as Ultimate Play The Game. Yours for just \$175 million.</p>	 <p>24 September 2001 The wonderful action-adventure <i>Ice</i> is released on PS2 by Sony.</p>	 <p>24 September 1992 Enjoy fistfuls of the coin-oppery with the arcade release of SNK's <i>Art of Fighting</i>.</p>
 <p>27 September 2013 Electronic Arts is due to release <i>FIFA 14</i> on PlayStation 3 and 4 as well as Xbox 360.</p>	 <p>29 September 2000 BioWare develops and interplay publishes <i>Baldur's Gate II: Shadows of Amn</i> in Europe for PC.</p>	 <p>29 September 2006 Planet Moon Studies' third-person shooter <i>Infected</i> is released on Sony's PSP across Europe.</p>	 <p>30 September 1997 Total Annihilation, the real-time strategy game, is released on PC by GT Interactive.</p>
 <p>6 October 1990 The Sega Game Gear handheld console is officially launched, starting with Japan.</p>	 <p>5 October 1987 LucasFilm releases its point-and-click graphic adventure game <i>Moriah</i> on the Apple II and Commodore 64.</p>	 <p>4 October 2002 Super Mario Sunshine is released across Europe on the Nintendo GameCube.</p>	 <p>1 October 2009 Sony releases the PSP Go handheld console in Europe and America. No UMD drive this time though...</p>
 <p>7 October 1993 The Mitsubishi MTX900 is released. Big, black, bold and beautiful... with very little software support.</p>	 <p>7 October 2003 Nokia releases the N-Gage, a mobile phone/handheld gaming device mash-up. It fails to impress...</p>	 <p>8 October 2004 The open-world platform game <i>Crash Twinsanity</i> is unleashed in Europe on the PS2 by Ukenai.</p>	 <p>10 October 2013 New issue of <i>Retro Gamer</i> hits the streets.</p>

BACK TO THE EIGHTIES

CHARTS

JANUARY 1981

ARCADE

- 1 Pac-Man (Namco)
- 2 Missile Command (Atari)
- 3 Asteroids (Atari)
- 4 Battlezone (Atari)
- 5 Moon Cresta (Nichibutsu)



GAME & WATCH

- 1 Fire (Nintendo)
- 2 Manhole (Nintendo)
- 3 Verrin (Nintendo)
- 4 Judge (Nintendo)
- 5 Flagman (Nintendo)



ATARI 2600

- 1 Adventure (Atari)
- 2 Circus Atari (Atari)
- 3 Dragster (Activision)
- 4 Pele's Soccer (Atari)
- 5 Othello (Atari)



MUSIC

- 1 Imagine (John Lennon)
- 2 Anmusic (Adam & The Ants)
- 3 Happy Xmas (War Is Over) (John & Yoko)
- 4 Woman (John Lennon)
- 5 Stop The Cavalry (Jona Lewie)



THIS MONTH IN... COIN CONNECTION

Coin Connection featured a small article on Atari Ireland, the facility in Tipperary where the bulk of European coin-op machines were manufactured and distributed. It also touched upon the forthcoming release of *Red Baron*, a World War II flight simulation which used the same graphics system as *Battlezone*.



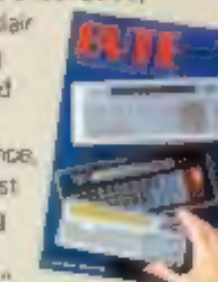
ANALOG

It was issue one of *Analog*, running at a flimsy 46 pages. In the news section it reported on the progression of the Atari Cosmos tabletop console, its use of holoptics and the impending releases of *Asteroids* and *Missile Command* on the trusty old Atari 2600.



BYTE

Byte finally reviewed Sinclair's ZX80 computer. Originally due out early 1980, it had arrived in the autumn. By that time the price had dipped under \$200, which Clive Sinclair used as a selling point. Byte found the ZX80 to be "high performance, low cost and best used for learning the concepts of programming".



• [Arcade] Coming soon to a grassy space near you: Bartender, Missile Command (right) in the smaller Cabaret cabinet. Get yer kabob off the joystick.

THE LATEST NEWS FROM JANUARY 1981

In an interesting move by Atari, it announced that it would start introducing a new size of arcade coin-op cabinet called the Cabaret, which was a smaller version of a full-size upright machine.

Having a much smaller footprint than your standard coin-op, the Cabaret was targeting small businesses that struggled with limited floor space. Videogaming and arcade gaming meant huge business, so now even establishments with minimal room could reap the benefits of the coin-op gaming boom... as would Atari, presumably...

The first games available on the Cabaret cabinet list were *Battlezone*, *Missile Command* and *Asteroids*.

Vtech, makers of LCD and LED handheld games revealed that it was to preview its first tabletop electronic toy at the New York Toy Fair the following month. *Lesson One* was a tabletop version of its first ever educational game, the *Computron*, a book-style game that was influenced by Texas Instruments' *Speak & Spell*, another popular educational handheld used for developing basic spelling, maths and word recognition.

Lesson One sold extremely well, and Vtech went on to become a key player in the educational electronic gaming market.

Lesson One was re-released in 1989 with updated casing and software.

Atari had some major hardware news that would have gamers parping in their trousers with methane-fuelled excitement. Atari announced that it would be previewing its latest console, the Atari Cosmos, at the New York Toy Fair.

The console's selling point was the use of holography in its games. Unfortunately, the games wouldn't be a true 3D holographic representation, more a series of moving LED lights in a grid pattern behind a transparent holographic picture.

This picture acted more as a piece of window dressing than anything you could actually interact with. Nonetheless, Atari thought that it would add more depth to the playing field, giving the sense of an environment rather than the usual flat series of lights that tabletop games all followed.

The Cosmos was also relatively powerful. It had two microprocessors inside



• [Atari 2600] Dodge 'Em was like a cross between Pac-Man and a driving game. Simple stuff, but a great little two-player gem.

its plastic underbelly, one to run the LEDs and another accounting for the sound, which was reportedly very realistic and crystal clear.

Eight games were to be released, including titles such as *Superman*, *Asteroids*, *Space Invaders* and *Road Runner*, which were expected to be priced at around ten dollars each. The price was kept so low due to the cartridge being little more than a big plastic key.

The Cosmos was pre-programmed with all eight games, meaning that you could buy the game pack containing the cartridge case that allowed access to the game, complete with the appropriate holographic backdrop. It was something of a unique move on Atari's part.

The Cosmos was developed by Allan Alcom, Roger Hector and Harry Jenkins, and their faith in the holoptics, as Atari called it, was unwavering. Sadly, the president of Atari, Ray Kassar, thought otherwise, despite some strong indications at the Toy Fair that the Cosmos



• [Arcade] Asteroids also received the Cabaret cabinet treatment.

would sell well. Pre-orders for the console just from the one viewing at the show were reportedly as high as 8,000 units.

Having spent considerable time, money and resources on the Cosmos, with the project first starting way back in 1978, the project was cancelled within touching distance of an official release. Despite several hundred empty console casings, packaging boxes and promotional items such as flyers being produced for shows and distributional sales packs, the Atari Holoptics laboratory was closed and the Cosmos was shelved.

JANUARY WORLD NEWS

12 January saw American television air the first episode of prime-time soap opera *Dynasty*. Featuring the well-off Carrington family, it was pitched as a direct competitor to the other big soap opera of the time, *Dallas*. It starred

John Forsythe as Blake Carrington, Linda Evans as his current wife Krystle and Joan Collins as his malicious former wife, Alexis Carrington Colby. It ran for over eight years, spanning an impressive 220 episodes. A spin-off series, *The Colbys*, aired in 1986, but it never received the same acclaim as *Dynasty*.

14 January saw some schlocky cinema action thanks to the world premiere of David Cronenberg's movie, *Scanners*. It starred Michael Ironside and Stephen Lack as the most powerful scanners, individuals who could use psychic powers to inflict

pain and control on others. Ironside's character, Darryl Revok, ran an underground scanner organisation that wanted to take over the world. Much fighting and plenty of head-popping action ensued...

15 January saw more television goodness arrive in the form of the superb *Hill Street Blues*. The fictional American police drama followed the lives and work of a police precinct and fast became essential television viewing, with it picking up many awards during its six year, seven series run of 146 episodes. A mere ten years later, Krisalis produced a reasonably playable Amiga and Atari ST game based on the show.

21 January saw more crimson spillages with the premiere of *The Howling*, which featured a community inhabited by strange residents and a forest full of werewolves. It starred Dee Wallace and Patrick Macnee.



JANUARY 1981 - it's cabaret time at Atari, Vtech goes educational, Dodge 'Em arrives on the 2600, Pulsar vies for your loose change in coin-op land and Atari goes holoptic with the Cosmos. Richard Burton isn't here, it's a hologram...



• [Arcade] Sega/Gremlin's unimpeccable game of shooting enemies and avoiding floors was more testing than it looked.

BACK TO THE NINETIES



• [Sega Saturn] An exclusive 3D Sonic game just for the Sega Saturn? Nope - it's been cancelled. SSB



• The Game Boy Pocket versus Game Boy original. The question is - what do you do if you don't have any sockets??



THE LATEST NEWS FROM JULY 1996

JULY 1996 - Game Boy shrinks, N64 Turok delayed, Saturn NIGHTS Into Dreams released, Sonic X-Treme sinks and Phantasmagoria 2 stinks. Richard Burton gets disembowelled yet again...



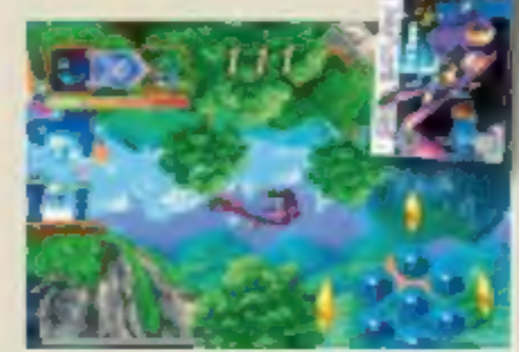
If you found the original Nintendo Game Boy a bit on the chunky side there was good news, as a smaller, thinner, lighter handheld was on its way - the Game Boy Pocket. It had a slightly larger screen that showed graphics in true black and white and required fewer batteries, running on just two AAAs rather than four AAs, offering up to ten hours of gaming. Oh, and all its games were still compatible with its older, fatter brother. Japanese consumers got first dibs with a USA/UK release following later. Coming soon to the newly released Nintendo 64 was a promising game from Acclaim, namely Turok: Dinosaur Hunter. It also had the honour of being the first game for the N64 developed by a third party.

However, development wasn't without its sticking points, and the proposed September launch of the title looked unlikely. After play testing, Acclaim decided that the game wasn't sufficiently playable and fell short of what it had envisaged quality-wise. Acclaim delayed the release to tinker with the gameplay and polish out the rougher parts of the game, finally letting it loose in February. The extra time spent proved worthwhile, with Turok eventually selling over 1.5 million units, an impressive figure. Its good showing helped boost sales of the Nintendo 64 console but also kept Acclaim's financial woes at bay, arguably saving the ailing company. Such was the critical response to Turok that it became a long-running and lucrative franchise - which is now a bit rubbish. Oh well... Japanese Sega Saturn owners were positively throbbing in anticipation with the news that Sega were releasing NIGHTS Into Dreams on 5 July. The aim of this action adventure game, designed by the team behind Sonic The Hedgehog, was to stop Wizeman The Wicked from taking Idaya, the physical forms of human energies and personality represented by coloured orbs. Wizeman is planning to use their energy to leave his domain and enter our own world.

After choosing between two children, Claris or Elliot, you had to embark on a 3D free-roaming journey to collect their lost Idaya. Along the way the pair meet the jester-esque Nights who works for Wizeman, but rebels and plots with the children to defeat his former boss. Entering the Idaya Palace near the start of a level introduces the side-scrolling flying sequence that NIGHTS has become famous for. You had to gather more Idaya and fly through large airborne rings while battling a selection of henchmen throughout each stage and a series of imaginative bosses. It's worth noting that your flying time is limited, and contact with an enemy loses more time. Eventually you'll fall to the ground, returning to your chosen child. The graphics and soundtrack in NIGHTS Into Dreams were both pretty outstanding. The flying/collecting sequences featuring Nights were remarkably good with superbly designed graphics, all of which ran fluidly and really conveyed the sensation of flying. This was helped in no small part by its regularly shifting camera angles. The game itself was fast-paced,

THIS MONTH IN... MEAN MACHINES SEGA

A trend becoming increasingly popular on consoles was the plentiful releases of retro gaming compilations. Forthcoming titles included Sega Ages (Sega Saturn), Atari Classics (Mega Drive) and Williams Arcade Classics (PlayStation). Retro gaming was as popular back in the Nineties as it is now it seems...



• [Sega Saturn] Strange, beautiful, atmospheric and extremely playable - NIGHTS Into Dreams was superb

graphically and aurally stunning and a pleasure to play. Star Ocean was another game to be released first in Japan that sadly remained a Japanese exclusive, due to the developing company, Enix, closing its American studio shortly before the game's development was complete. The Super Nintendo action role-playing game used a top-down perspective and was well received by critics and gamers alike, becoming the first in a seven game series. Star Ocean was also just one of two games - the other being Street Fighter Alpha 2 - to use a special compression chip, the S-DD1, in its cartridge to compress gaming data. This was due

MAXIMUM

It was issue seven of the glossy magazine and, sadly, it was also the last. Maximum would be "taking a break" before coming back slimmer, cheaper and more 32-bit orientated. Maximum also touched on retro gaming and particularly emulation, looking at ways of playing aged Spectrum, C64 and Colecovision titles.



• [Nintendo 64] Turok: Dinosaur Hunter did wonders for the N64 and also for its development company Acclaim.

to the detailed graphics used on the SNES and the extensive voice acting implemented throughout the gameplay. The compression chip also doubled as a copy protection system, making games that employed it far more difficult to copy and emulate. Controversial release of the month was Phantasmagoria 2: A Puzzle Of Flesh by Sierra Entertainment on PC, a sequel to the contentious original. The interactive movie game leaned heavily on the psychological element of its horror theme making the point-and-click adventure a harrowing journey. The game contained extreme violence and sexual content and was strictly censored in several countries while being banned in many others. You controlled the seemingly dull Curtis Craig, an office worker with a hidden past. He had been institutionalised a year prior and was now suffering from hallucinations of horror and gore in his office environment. A co-worker was later found brutally

AMIGA POWER

Amiga Power ran a number of interesting features in issue 63. In addition to exploring why film licences should be strangled at birth, there was also an excellent article that explored the possible connection between Amiga games and Michael Caine. Disappointment of the month was the 20 per cent scoring Vexilla 3.



murdered in his office cubicle. More gore and murders followed, and it seemed that the company that you work for is linked to the mysterious Project Threshold and Dimension X... Sadly, the game was a clunky, linear affair that could be completed quickly. The sheer amount of Full Motion Video in the game meant that actual gameplay and interactivity within the game suffered greatly. The storyline was also criticised, particularly for the amount of sexual content inherent in it, including instances of sadomasochism and rape. The censors also marked it down for use of the F-word and a disembowelment scene. Censors, reviewers and gamers all gave Phantasmagoria 2: A Puzzle Of Flesh a wide berth, and quite rightly so. In addition to NIGHTS, Sega Saturn owners were also looking forward to the return of Sonic The Hedgehog, who was due to make his first original Sega Saturn appearance in Sonic X-Treme. With a Christmas release mooted, development was progressing at a snail's pace. The original game engine had been viewed by concerned Sega Japan representatives, who were fairly unimpressed with the progress made. They requested changes to be made that, realistically, put the proposed deadline out of reach. When one project director quit and the other suffered a long-term illness, it was decided that the entire Sonic X-Treme project would be cancelled. Still, at least we have Sonic R...

JULY WORLD NEWS

5 July saw the UK release of Mission: Impossible starring Tom Cruise as Ethan Hunt, a member of the Impossible Mission Force, an independent espionage agency. A mission in Prague goes disastrously wrong, the team is compromised and all of them are seemingly killed. IMF believes Hunt to be a mole who sabotaged the mission. He goes on the run and recruits some former IMF agents with a plan to clear his name. Action, adventure, twists, fish tanks, exploding chewing gum and a helicopter stuck to a high speed train going through the Channel Tunnel - pretty much all you need for a summer action blockbuster. 10 July saw the awful news that Lin Russell and her six-year-old daughter Megan had been murdered near to their home in Kent after walking home from school through woodland. Nine-year-old Josie Russell was found with severe head injuries but made an almost full recovery and helped police with their enquiries. 38-year-old Michael Stone was later arrested, charged and found guilty. He received three life sentences. 19 July saw the UK release of the Adam Sandler comedy Happy Gilmore. He played an ice hockey player that finds out he has the most powerful golfing drive in the world. He joins the PGA tour in an attempt to win the prize money to save his grandmother's house, but his hot-tempered ice hockey attitude remains...

CHARTS

JULY 1996

SUPER NINTENDO

- 1 Donkey Kong Country 2: Diddy's Kong Quest (Nintendo)
- 2 Killer Instinct (Nintendo)
- 3 Yoshi's Island (Nintendo)
- 4 FIFA Soccer '96 (EA)
- 5 PGA Tour Golf '96 (THQ)

SEGA SATURN

- 1 Street Fighter Alpha (Virgin Games)
- 2 Panzer Dragoon Zwei (Sega)
- 3 Sega Rally (Sega)
- 4 Virtua Cop (Sega)
- 5 NFL: Quarterback Club (Sega)

SEGA MEGA DRIVE

- 1 Toy Story (Sega)
- 2 FIFA Soccer '96 (EA)
- 3 Sonic And Knuckles (Sega)
- 4 Australian Rugby League (EA)
- 5 Ecco The Dolphin 2: Tides Of Time (Sega)

MUSIC

- 1 Killing Me Softly (Fugees)
- 2 Wannabe (Spice Girls)
- 3 Born Slippy (Underworld)
- 4 Forever Love (Gary Barlow)
- 5 Mysterious Girl (Peter Andre)



RETRODATE
PROFILE

- NAME: BILL MATTHEWS
- JOINED: 3 MAY 2012
- LOCATION: EDINBURGH, UK
- OCCUPATION: SO BORING IT WILL BRING TEARS TO YOUR EYES
- FAVE GAME SYSTEM: ATARI 2600

Chuck Norris Superkicks

WE WISH CHUCK NORRIS WOULD DESTROY IT WITH A SUPER KICK

#66

» XONDX » ATARI 2600 » 1983
I really, really want to like this game. Any game starring the hardest man that there ever was and that there ever will be has surely got to be good... right? The answer, unfortunately, is no.

What really lets Chuck Norris Superkicks down are its controls. They're bad. They're really, really bad. You can play this game hundreds of times and never improve. When you first appear on the fighting playfield it's just you (Chuck) and the bad guy. You charge at him, fingers poised on the joystick to roundhouse kick the mother in the face. You approach, you're ready and then, POW, you're on the floor. And then you're on the floor again. You get up again, but now - from nowhere

- the baddie has got a gun. He shoots you - you go down. He shoots you again - you die and wind up at the start. And that's how it goes, over and over until you finally, well... game over.

I remember being so excited to get this game only to become disheartened with it. No matter how quick I thought I was, the henchman was always quicker. Even when I forced myself to sit down for a proper session the best I ever did was get to the second level, where there were two henchmen - both quicker than me - meaning that I died and went back to the start even quicker.

I'm sure there are folk out there - folk willing to put the time in - who really enjoy this game, but for me, it's just not any fun. ☆



WIN!
RETRO GAMER
COASTERS

Upload your classic profiles for your chance to win
www.retrogamer.net



It pushed the SNES's capabilities to its limits and had a fanbase eagerly awaiting an adaptation of their beloved tabletop RPG. Denis Murphy breaks down the story behind a cyberpunk classic

This year saw the release of *Shadowrun Returns*, one of the many success stories that have emerged from the creation of Kickstarter. However, though Halbrained Schemes has brought his vision of *Shadowrun* to fruition 24 years after its creation as a tabletop RPG, Beam Software created the first videogame incarnation of *Shadowrun* for the SNES back in 1993, a title that blended both the RPG and action genres – as well as reality and the virtual world.

Originally pitched by Gregg Barnett in conjunction with Jordan Weisman of FASA and accepted by Data East, *Shadowrun* was in limbo during development due to his sudden departure from the project. With Gregg absent, the game was heavily

reworked during development, as one developer puts it, “to make it actually achievable.” After slightly deviating from Gregg’s original vision for it to have a “strong noir feel”, one major change to the gameplay was the removal of the ability to use a motorcycle to traverse the city. Instead, a train system was implemented, thus putting down an excessive spritae – a problem that was persistent during the game’s development.

Despite seeing changes throughout development from Gregg’s originally accepted pitch, the main focus of *Shadowrun* remained: to deliver a game that both fans of the tabletop RPG and newcomers could enjoy. Game designer on the project after Gregg departed, [redacted] reveals his appreciation of tabletop RPGs, “I’m a



[JAMES] At the beginning of the game, John [redacted] is put on the spot.

The main reason for bringing to perform quality fun to future generations. 70-08 spw.

[JAMES] There are some things here that are a little bit to play with.

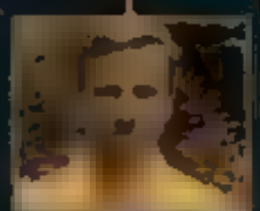
long time RPG enthusiast. I knew of the *Shadowrun* game (though at that time, I wasn’t a player myself). I had my own RPG games published out in the marketplace (*Albedo, Lace & Steel*), so I wanted to do a good job for my fellow RPG fans. Despite admittedly not being an active player of *Shadowrun* himself at the time, Paul instantly saw the possibilities that the universe offered and was determined to get its videogame translation correct. “It offered a chance to do adventures that operated on both the physical level, and also on the plane of cyberspace,” he explains. “Plus, most adventures up to that point had been about individual characters. *Shadowrun* was about assembling teams.” With the team assembled and a tabletop RPG fan as its lead, *Shadowrun*’s development went into full swing.

The game opens in Seattle, Washington in the year 2050, amidst a sprawling cyberpunk backdrop. The story in *Shadowrun* was simple, yet effective. After being gunned down and left for dead, the player takes command of mercenary Jake Armitage and must find out who the mysterious ‘Dreke’ is, the individual who ordered his execution. However, the first issue was whether the world the original tabletop RPG envisioned could be physically realized within the confines of a simple SNES cartridge.

Creating *Shadowrun*’s world was no easy task. The choice to present the game from an isometric perspective was, in part, picked to give the illusion of a fully 3D world, seeing as such an environment on the SNES wasn’t feasible at that time. As system programmer [redacted] puts it, “We wanted the game to be in 3D, not top-down as in other RPGs. A room-based isometric view was designed. The overall graphical design was highly tailored by the systems hardware, including the scrolling of two screens and also the number of levels of items that could be overlapped. For a game with its feet placed firmly in the realm of a rule-based tabletop RPG, Beam Software looked to [redacted] who served as map constructor on the project. “To be honest, there wasn’t really an approach or a plan,” he recalls. “Between us, Andrew Buttery and I were in charge

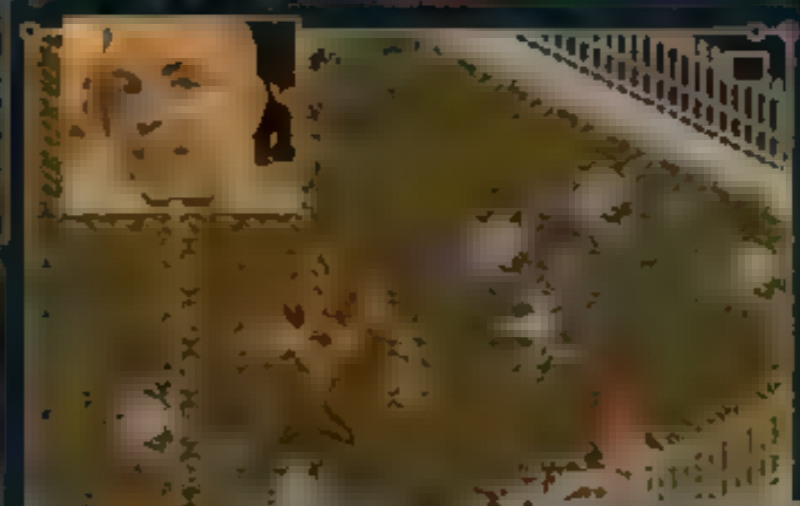
of making all of the maps for the game. As is always the case, we were working on the maps at the same time the game engine and the map design tool were being created.” Also praising the freedom given to him during development, Justin says, “Most of the time, we were given a great deal of freedom to create the maps. We worked with the artists on elements for each of the areas, like the city streets, the docks or the ship. The most important thing was for us to try to find new and interesting ways to use the limited artwork we had.”

Despite limitations, Justin found realizing the world of *Shadowrun* on the SNES rather frustrating, lamenting, “We were always under the pump on *Shadowrun*, and lots of parts of the game were thrown together, cut out, or bodged together! We were always running out of memory, and we begged the publisher for a 12 megabit



PUBLISHER	DATA EAST
DEVELOPER	BEAM SOFTWARE, LASERBEAM
RELEASED	1993
GENRE	ACTION/RPG

“I wanted to do a good job for my fellow RPG fans”



[JAMES] Rather than being made, the *Shadowrun* characters are the product of a modified view.

cartridge but they wouldn’t commit to the extra memory. So, the artists would be constantly revising all of their artwork to reduce the character counts. That’s why the helicopter at the volcano is viewed front-on, so we could flip the left and right sides, and why all of the baddies have the same corpses...” Though *Shadowrun* did have a number of its character and enemy sprites downgraded which impacted the game’s intended visual flair, Justin is eager to call both the actual engine and the in-game tools “fantastic”.

Being one of two programmers behind the project, and also responsible for architectural design and the PC tools which allowed the building of the world, Andrew explains how he and his fellow programmer worked their way around certain graphical limitations. “The SNES did not provide an arbitrary bitmap rendering system as is common today, but used a system of character generators and sprites,” he begins. “This meant the backgrounds had to be built on a rigid 64 by 32 grid of eight by eight cells. The hardware provided three layers with which characters (implemented using sprites) could move, but this wasn’t enough. We used a special hardware trick called ‘sprite masking’ which was actually a hardware bug that let us cut holes in sprites where the characters were, so we could make a sprite appear to go behind a pillar for example. This required a complex database, so the PC tool allowed designers to construct levels from modular parts from the artists and build 3D information (floor is flat, wall is upright etc). The levels would then be compiled into a single database so that all the graphic information could be shared in a virtual character set. The runtime building of the levels from this database was written by Darren Bremner, all in glorious assembler code.” Additionally, Andrew goes on to elaborate on how the game was put together. “All the game systems were written in assembler code, and most other



▶ [SNES] Hacking on a late-built copy of the original SNES, and our friend, Marshall, also a late developer.

game for the SNES were completely written in assembler code. There was little use of languages such as C, due partly to the little runtime RAM available. There was only 128K of RAM into which [we could] decompress art and audio, as well as run the game and its logic. However, we didn't want to have to write all the game logic in Assembler; it would be too error-prone and tedious. As other languages were heavy on RAM usage we designed our own language, which we compiled to a virtual stack-based code that the runtime code would interpret and execute. The language was designed so the compiler could pre-compile the exact workspace size (or stack) a script would need down to the byte, so the runtime could allocate exactly the space required [a concept I learnt from work with transputers]. This let us use multiple scripts for all the characters in a scene in very little space, a few K. I wrote the compiler and Darren wrote the runtime.

As for citing inspiration for *Shadowrun* beyond its obvious source material, all three developers come to the same conclusion – William Gibson's classic 1984 cyberpunk novel *Neuromancer*, the novel that defined the cyberpunk genre. Justin elaborates, while also mentioning another somewhat unlikely source of inspiration, "There's a huge amount of *Neuromancer* in *Shadowrun*, as there was in all of the cyberpunk genre. The other influence that players have probably noticed was *Minesweeper*, the time-killing puzzle that shipped with Windows. When it came to the hacking mini-game, no one could think of how to do it until someone came up with the idea of using *Minesweeper*'s mechanics for the hacking. Beyond the cyberpunk city setting, the player also had the ability to enter the "Matrix", a virtual world within *Shadowrun*.

Created primarily by Graeme Scott, it was presented

mainly game and featured a new style of gameplay to emphasize the gulf between the real world and this virtual cyberspace. Paul notes, "We had to keep it as simple as possible, given the time constraints and the memory constraints of the machine." Yet despite talk of the system's shortcomings to a certain degree, Andrew was quite confident that it could handle *Shadowrun*. He recalls, "The SNES was a great machine, especially after working on its predecessor the NES. Its very non-orthogonal hardware always made it a challenge on how to design a game around it. It was probably the most powerful graphic chip of its type, even compared to the AGB. It not only had a CPU whose speed was measured in the low MHz but a host of special DMA tricks (giving us the famous Mode 7) and excellent audio that, for the first time, allowed a musician to actually compose real music for a videogame. Overall, the SNES allowed us to deliver a console game which, for the

“Arthur did what he loved best, and that was game design”



▶ [SNES] Shadowrun game character's head and eye rings to light and change.



DEVELOPER HIGHLIGHTS
THE MUNCHER
 SYSTEM: CEA, ZX SPECTRUM
 YEAR: 1988
THE WAY OF THE EXPLODING PIST
 SYSTEM: VICARLE
 YEAR: 1982
THE HOBBIT
 SYSTEM: VICARLE
 YEAR: 1982



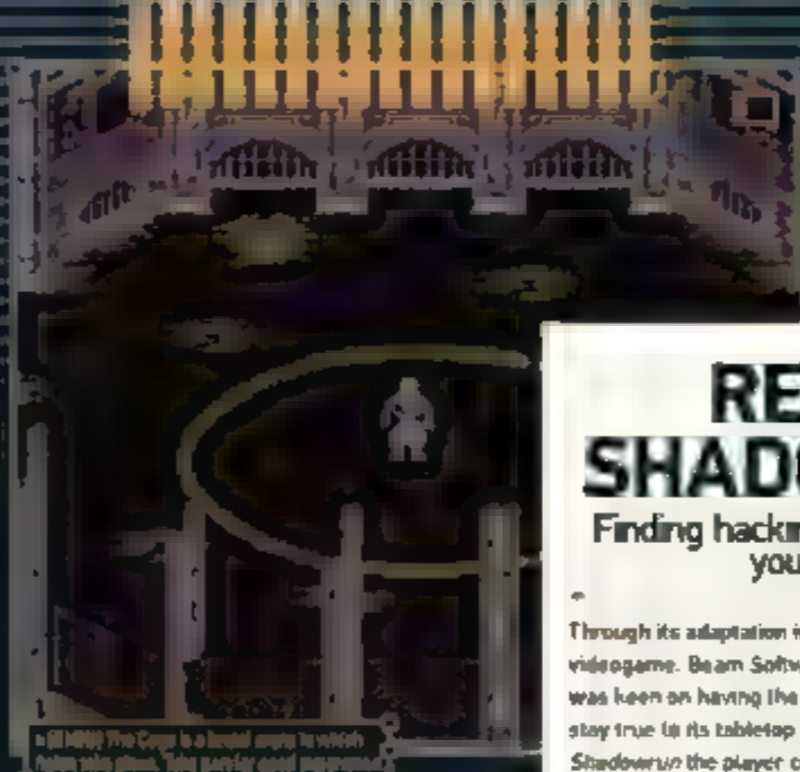
▶ [SNES] The Corp is a level area in which from this point, the party goes around.

time, didn't have to compromise on its quality due to hardware limitations."

However, there is one side to this story that will never be told again, and that is the first-hand account of Arthur Kalouala, project manager and additional game designer on the project. Arthur Kalouala passed away in September 2012, and the man who was known as "Artie" to some of his friends is sadly missed and not forgotten. Justin reflects: "Arthur was a great friend, especially during *Shadowrun*. He was the sort of producer and designer who put everything into the game, and made it a pleasure to work on. We'd go out at 11pm for Slurpees for the team, and head to Pizza Hut every Tuesday for all-you-can-eat pizza. Unfortunately, he was born with a heart defect and had open-heart surgery when he was around 20. Last year his heart finally gave out and he died." Paul also chimes in with his thoughts on the passing of a friend, telling us, "Arthur was a deeply serious and dedicated guy. What I loved about him was that you could just discuss an idea with him and let him go. He'd work away at it and something good would result." Andrew also shares his memories, and believes that *Shadowrun*



▶ [SNES] Like in *Shadowrun*, it was just like every other game, but it was a game with a different twist.



▶ [SNES] The Corp is a level area in which from this point, the party goes around.

meant quite a lot to Arthur. "Naturally I was deeply shocked and upset with Arthur's passing last year, as Arthur joined myself and [other developers] as a member of Beam Entertainment over one-and-a-half decades ago. This was compounded by the fact I was on the other side of the world and couldn't attend his funeral. On *Shadowrun*, Arthur did what he loved best, and that was game design. I believe he would have remembered [it] as one of the best projects he worked on."

A year after Beam Software released *Shadowrun*, another *Shadowrun* title hit the shelves, this time developed by BlueSky Software for the Sega Mega Drive, which was then followed by a Japanese take on the franchise in 1996 by Compile. It seems Beam Software hit a timely nerve, but, despite a fantastic critical response to its *Shadowrun*, a direct sequel never materialized. In fact, despite a post-credits message promising a sequel, the team were adamant that it was never seriously discussed. Andrew does interject with a revealing story though, "The Japanese version was interesting. This was because it came to be proposed after we had finished the English version, and we were presented by the Japanese publisher with a big printout where they had reverse-engineered the VRAM [graphic memory] for all the different screens, working out



▶ [SNES] There is no other game that I know of that is like this, but it was a game with a different twist.

RECRUITING SHADOWRUNNERS

Finding hacking too difficult? You need to get yourself some friends...

Through its adaptation into a videogame, Beam Software was keen on having the game stay true to its tabletop roots. In *Shadowrun* the player could hire other *Shadowrunners* as backup throughout the game. They could be found in the many dingy bars of Seattle, and if a *Shadowrunner* died, they re-spawned back at where you found them.



Without the penalty of losing a potential ally forever. This addition of building up a team paid homage to the group-style gameplay of the tabletop RPG. The number that could be hired, and the length of time that they could stay with you, was dictated by the player's Charisma level; if your level was higher, you could save money on *Shadowrunner* hires. Additionally, there was one ally that would try and kill the player resulting in quite an unexpected confrontation for unaware players.

where the Japanese font could be fitted in. While it was an impressive piece of work, we didn't have the heart to tell them it was useless. This highlighted a difference between how we in the West (or South for Beam) worked differently to the East. While they allocated the space for the art by hand, we wrote systems to do this in code, so we simply added the Japanese font to a table and it was done."

As these three developers reminisce about their game, we had to ask, are there any secrets in *Shadowrun* that no one knows about? Surprisingly, two of them speak up. James lays out what hasn't been



▶ [SNES] There is no other game that I know of that is like this, but it was a game with a different twist.

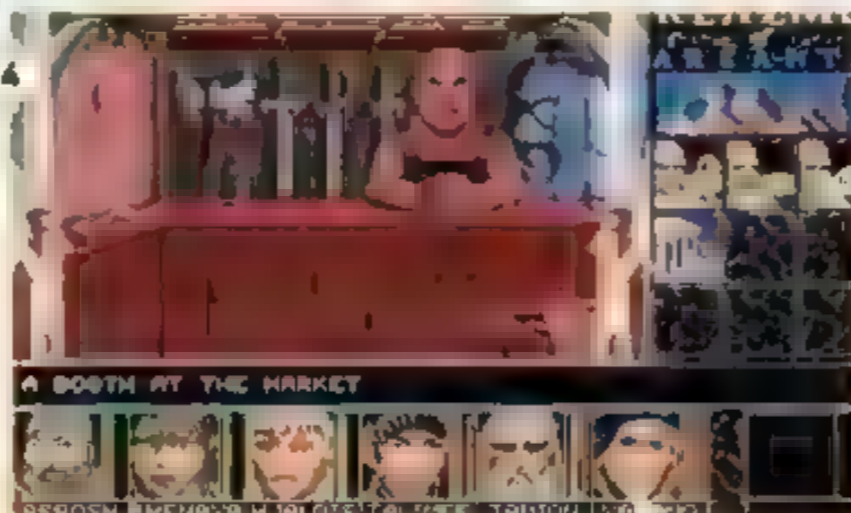
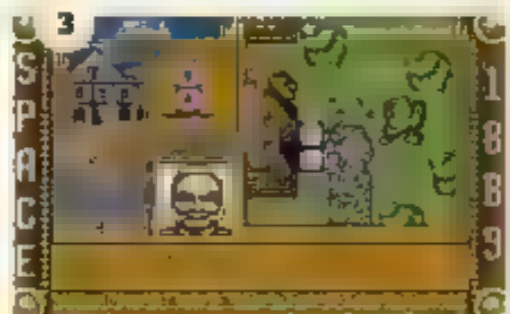
discovered for 20 years, saying "There is a cheat in the game, but I can't remember exactly how to do it. Generally, there is a flickering streetlight in the first street area after you wake up in the morgue. If you examine the Matchbox four times around the flickering light, you're teleported to a chest room that contains a bunch of upgrades and gives access to all of the levels." However, Andrew also jumps in with an alternate take on it all: "There is a key in the game, a console device around a lamp post in the main square that was put in for QA. I wish I could remember the actual cheat, but it is now 20 years ago." Confirming accounts, certainly, but now a secret best explored by the retro-gaming public.

20 years on, *Shadowrun* remains one of the SNES's strongest and most memorable Western titles, and certainly its best RPG. It combined a wonderful narrative, a gorgeous symphony-laden setting and fast-paced and interesting gameplay together in one neat little package. Looking back, how do these developers view their work? "It actually really like what we did," Paul remarks. "As other people produced games in following years, I could see the influence of *Shadowrun* through many of them." Justin also backs up Paul's feelings on the game, saying, "I'm still amazed we actually finished the game! We were a young team and were fortunate to be given the opportunity to work on a game that went on to become a minor classic!" Andrew, on the other hand simply commends the efforts of all involved, intimating, "I regard *Shadowrun* as one of the best projects I have worked on. I think this is mainly because the entire team was really into the game and the concept and went that extra mile on each aspect of the game – design, art, scriptwriters and QA." It would appear that *Brainbrained Schemes*' new *Shadowrun* game has a lot to live up to.



FROM TABLE TO COMPUTER

More classic RPGs that became fully-fledged videogames



MECHWARRIOR

DEVELOPER: DYNAMIX
PUBLISHER: ATVISION
SYSTEM: MS-DOS
SHARP X68000
YEAR: 1989

1 MechWarrior, based upon the tabletop RPG of the same name, which is part of the *DataTech* franchise, placed the player within the cockpit of a hulking mech, something that was quite interesting and new back in '89. Despite the title, MechWarrior had much more to offer than standard mech-on-mech combat. Based around quite an impressive reputation system, the player could build relationships with the five Great Houses that could lead to opening up more missions to undertake. Spawning a whole slew of sequels and spin-offs, MechWarrior games have arguably become even more popular than their tabletop RPG source material.

MEGATRAVELLER: THE ZHODANI CONSPIRACY

DEVELOPER: PARAGON SOFTWARE
PUBLISHER: IN-HOUSE
SYSTEM: AMIGA, ATARI ST, MS-DOS
YEAR: 1990

2 Based on the tabletop RPG, *Traveller*, this pixelated title gave the player a wonderful sense of freedom despite receiving mixed reviews upon release. The player takes command of five adventurers as they try and save their civilization, the Imperium, from the alien race known as the Zhodani. Covering eight solar systems and 75 planets to visit, *Megatraveller's* world is vast and interesting. While combat is lacking at times and some elements of its source material are missing, it does not take away from how innovative and daring this was for its time.

SPACE: 1889

DEVELOPER: PARAGON SOFTWARE
PUBLISHER: MICROPROSE SOFTWARE INC.
SYSTEM: AMIGA, ATARI, MS-DOS
YEAR: 1989

3 Here's one that has gone under the radar for many in *Space: 1889* you create five unique characters from scratch and set out on an epic adventure. Set in an alternate 19th Century Victorian era that has already discovered space travel, the game takes the familiar and has a little fun, this merging of history and sci-fi is rather interesting and plays out exceptionally well as you encounter historical characters such as Jules Verne, Jack the Ripper and Napoleon, but with a twist. With the addition of being able to purchase spaceships on top of the familiar RPG formula, *Space: 1889* is an undiscovered gem.

REALMS OF ARKANIA: BLADE OF DESTINY

DEVELOPER: ATTIC ENTERTAINMENT SOFTWARE
PUBLISHER: US GOLD
SYSTEM: AMIGA, MS-DOS
YEAR: 1992

4 Though this year sees a remake of it, the original *Realms of Arkania: Blade of Destiny* which is the first title in the *Triander Trilogy* should not be overlooked. Based upon the tabletop RPG, *The Dark Eye*, the game is steeped heavily in lore and, in turn, does a great job at world building, taking command of six characters, the player navigates through beautifully constructed 3D environments and battles fierce enemies. Complete with rather in-depth character customization and a superbly detailed isometric battle view, *Realms of Arkania: Blade of Destiny* is a terrific start to a highly enjoyable trilogy.

SHADOWRUN

DEVELOPER: BLUE SKY SOFTWARE
PUBLISHER: SEGA
SYSTEM: MEGA DRIVE
YEAR: 1994

5 One year after Beam Software released its superb SNES adaptation of *Shadowrun*, Blue Sky Software released its own take on the franchise. While it comes from the very same source material, it is a rather different beast compared to its Super Nintendo counterpart. With a fully customizable player character right from the start, a cracking narrative, accessible combat and a wonderful portrayal of the Matrix (which is arguably better than that of the SNES game), this is yet another excellent vision of the tabletop role-playing game. It takes a slightly different approach, but some might make a case for it being the superior adaptation of its source material.

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS: TOWER OF DOOM

DEVELOPER: CAPCOM
PUBLISHER: IN-HOUSE
SYSTEM: ARCADE
YEAR: 1990

6 Leave it to Capcom to take the *Dungeons & Dragons* franchise and turn it into a side-scrolling fighter. But you know what? It works, and it works amazingly well. Despite its odd choice of genre and a focus on fast, intense action, *Tower of Doom* retains some of the hallmarks of a classic *Dungeons & Dragons* experience. Playable with up to four characters which include the fighter, Dwarf, Cleric and Elf, and containing a massive array of attacks, actions and spells, *Tower of Doom* is a surprisingly fresh and enjoyable approach to the series. It spawned its own sequel, *Shadow Over Mystara*. It is now available on Xbox 360, PS3 and PC.

BALDUR'S GATE

DEVELOPER: BENTON BOWLES
PUBLISHER: BLACK ISLE STUDIOS, INTERPLAY ENTERTAINMENT
SYSTEM: PC, MAC OS
YEAR: 1998

7 *Baldur's Gate* is often listed as one of the greatest true RPG experiences to date, taking place within the Forgotten Realms, one of the many D&D universes. *Baldur's Gate* is an in-depth and story-driven game for players who seek true adventure, boasting an excellent dialogue system and diverse party-based combat. *Baldur's Gate* is actually based on *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons 2nd Edition* rules. It is an utter treat for players and non-players of *Dungeons & Dragons* alike and spawned a direct sequel, a number of expansions and a spin-off. For many, it is the starting point for those wishing to enter the world of D&D.

PLANESCAPE: TORMENT

DEVELOPER: BENTON BOWLES
PUBLISHER: INTERPLAY ENTERTAINMENT
SYSTEM: PC
YEAR: 1999

8 For many gamers, *Tormen* is the best Western RPG of all time, and it is easy to understand why once you become involved in its rich story. Helmed by Chris Avellone, the game placed the player in the role of The Nameless One, an immortal who has lived countless lives yet forgotten them all. Through exploring the city of Sigil, The Nameless One must reclaim memories of his past lives. With a focus on narrative instead of combat, *Planescape: Torment* is a unique for the gamer weary of cheap thrills. Thought provoking and wonderfully realized, it is a must-play, constantly maturing with each subsequent playthrough.

NEVERWINTER NIGHTS

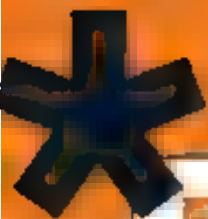
DEVELOPER: BENTON BOWLES
PUBLISHER: INFOGRAVES
SYSTEM: WINDOWS, LINUX, MAC OS X
YEAR: 2002

9 *Neverwinter Nights* was named after the original game of the same name by Stormfront Studios in 1991, which was the first graphical massively multiplayer online role-playing game ever. Whereas *Benton* based *Baldur's Gate* on *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons 2nd Edition* rules, *Neverwinter Nights* used *3rd Edition* rules. It also boasted slick graphics that brought the world of the Forgotten Realms to life like never before and intuitive combat that kept gameplay fun and smart. *Neverwinter Nights* is one of the best trips through the world of *Dungeons & Dragons*, with a range of excellent creation tools for making your own role-playing adventures.

VAMPIRE: THE MASQUERADE - BLOODLINES

DEVELOPER: TRIKKA GAMES
PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION
SYSTEM: WINDOWS
YEAR: 2004

10 Set within the universe of *World of Darkness* by White Wolf Publishing, *Vampire: The Masquerade - Bloodlines* begins with the death of the main character, only to be resurrected as a vampire. The player begins by choosing between multiple vampire clans, each with their own powers, personality and ability to steer the story in different ways. From there the player views Los Angeles from the eyes of vampire, completing missions across the city while being the way keeping up the Masquerade - a vampire law that prevents the human world from knowing about their very existence. A truly wonderful and atmospheric title.



A MOMENT WITH...

Burke Trieschmann

Composer of such classics such as Pandemonium, The Unholy War and The Horde, Burke Trieschmann speaks to Denis Murphy about his two decades' worth of work in the business

Who is Burke Trieschmann?

As a composer, you have to be able to communicate with the game designers and producers at the beginning of the project so it's clear what's needed, what style best compliments the gameplay and how many assets (variations, interactive functionality, etc.) will need to be created to get you there. Usually a well-designed game will have an Audio Design document as well.

Why did you start composing videogames?

Doing music and sound for games came about as a natural progression of following the music industry line and whatever situations came up along the way. I've always had an interest in learning and playing new instruments and also the technology behind recording and creating music.

How do you approach your work?

Before composing music, or any sort of sound design, it's important to find a common

language to communicate with the game designers and producers at the beginning of the project so it's clear what's needed, what style best compliments the gameplay and how many assets (variations, interactive functionality, etc.) will need to be created to get you there. Usually a well-designed game will have an Audio Design document as well.

What was you trying to achieve with your Pandemonium score?

Pandemonium was a very organic score that tried to incorporate a more traditional and Celtic feel to the music that was fun, bouncy and subversive, and sometimes. One challenge was that the PlayStation 2 needed to have the music bits in memory and triggered by small sequence files at run time. My goal was to take as many real performances of musicians playing traditional instruments and cut them up into smaller sampled bits that could be re-triggered by the sequence files to make variations of music. In effect, I was creating a musical instrument palette I could work with and still stay in the memory regions of the PS2 that had only 1MB single-instrument samples but also had an onboard percussion, mandolin, violin, etc. and phrases that could give some life and feel to the soundtrack.

Was Pandemonium 3 ever planned?

The team that developed Pandemonium 2 moved on to start another company and



PlayStation 2: Pandemonium featured a great voice cast, state-of-the-art graphics, but was plagued using a 2D plane. The game also used a mix of 2D music and 3D sprites.

Crystal Dynamics did not pursue another Pandemonium. I think a lot of focus was on other titles that they had been developing.

What's been your most enjoyable project to date?

Oh, so many to start to choose just one. The early soundtracks for The Horde, both Pandemonium and The Unholy War were quite challenging and fun.

And what's your dream project?

One that is designed from the ground up to support high-end music and audio as an interactive, immersive and evolving score that both reacted to the game state and the game state would react seamlessly to the music. Having the player be able to make music inside the game and save the results of their creative decisions. A game engine that could support high-end DSP effects on the fly, unlimited audio memory, surround support and a built-in set of instruments that could be used for scoring and creating sound effects. A game that was musically reactive and configurable to the player's style, emotional reactions and gameplay decisions. There are games out there that have come close to this, and as consoles and computers get more powerful, the audio will continue to improve. However, I do think successful game music should not be too much of a "self" but instead complement and raise the gameplay experience to a higher level.

PlayStation: Pandemonium featured a great voice cast, state-of-the-art graphics, but was plagued using a 2D plane. The game also used a mix of 2D music and 3D sprites.



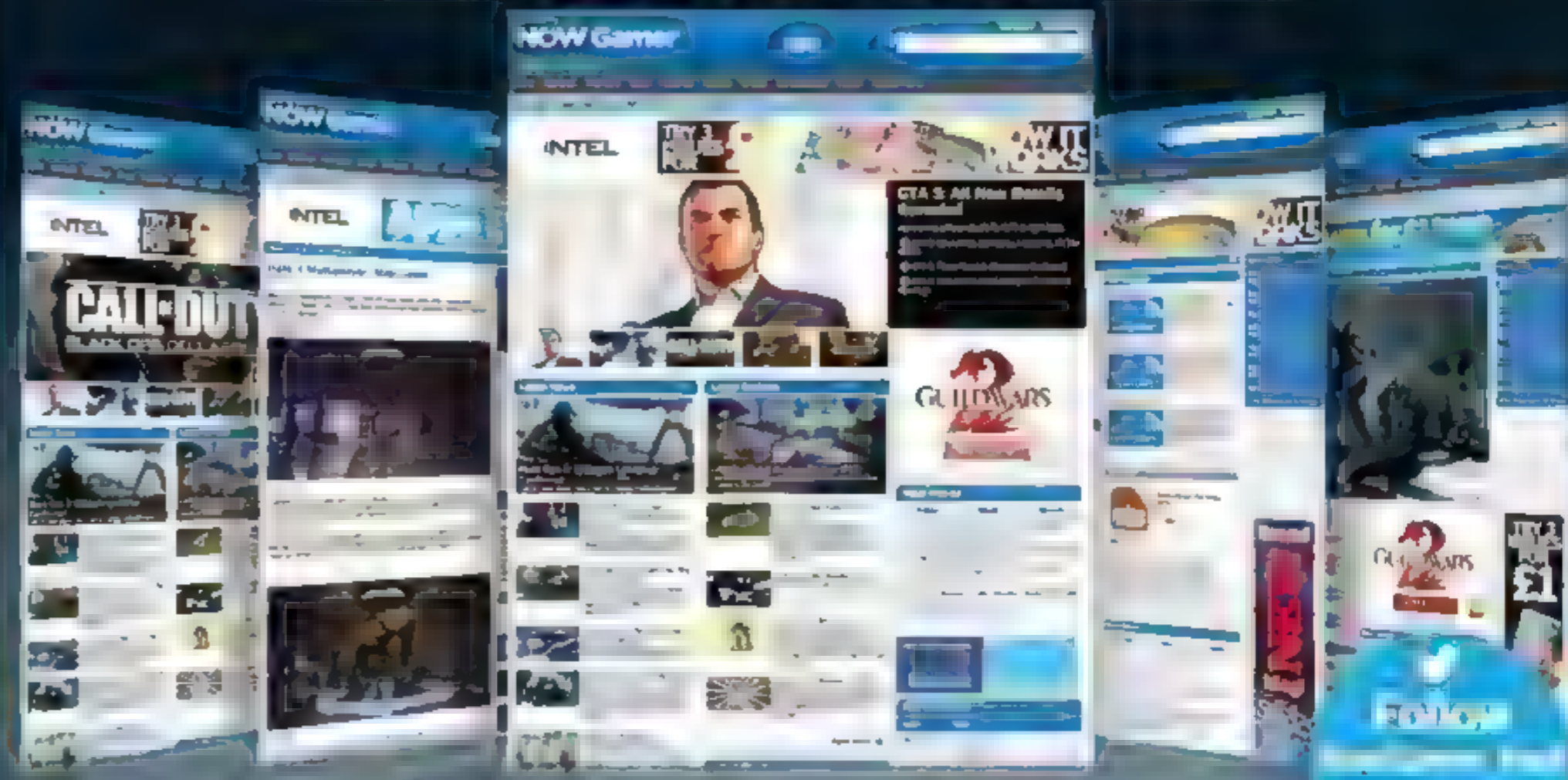
PlayStation: While not as powerful as the PS2, Pandemonium 2's soundtrack was mostly 2D and audio that Burke found interesting.



PlayStation: The Horde features a highly detailed and fun soundtrack that complements the game's story and characters.

EVERY GAME. EVERY FORMAT. ONE CHOICE

www.NOWGAMER.com



NOWGAMER.com

FIRST WITH THE BIGGEST GAMES

GTA V Hitman: Absolution Tomb Raider Mass Effect 4



VISIT NOWGAMER.COM TODAY

Available on:



facebook.com/NowGamer

twitter.com/NowGamer_Feed

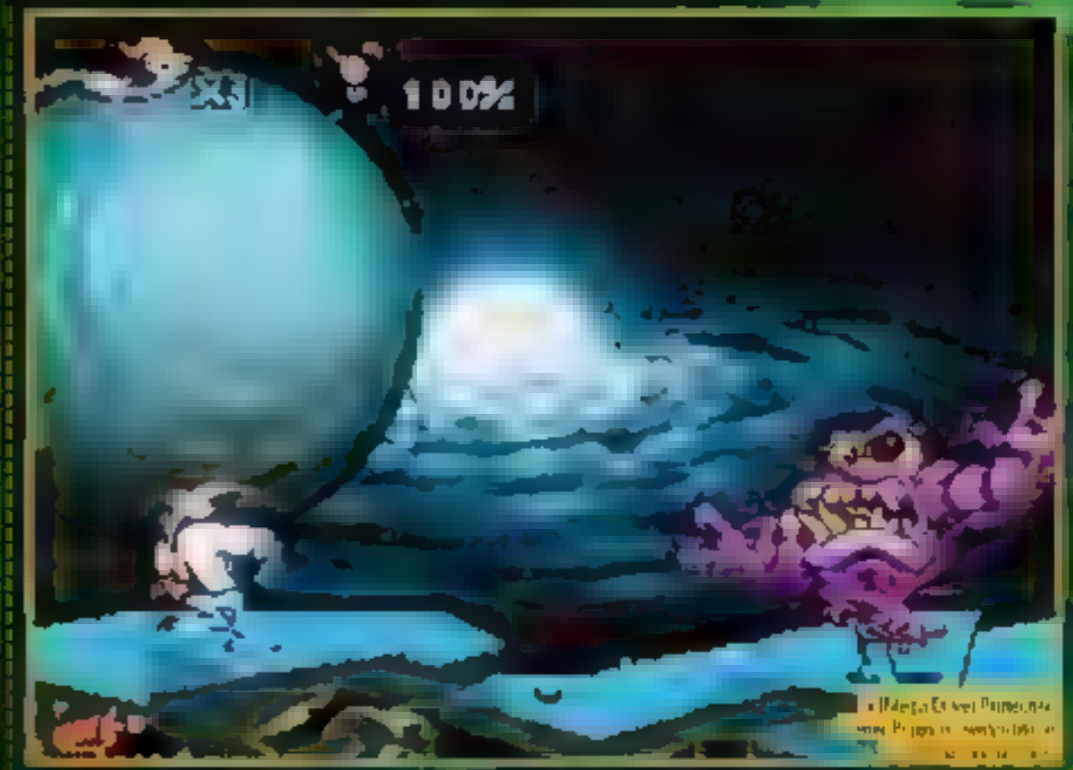
THE STORY OF

EARTHWORM

JIM

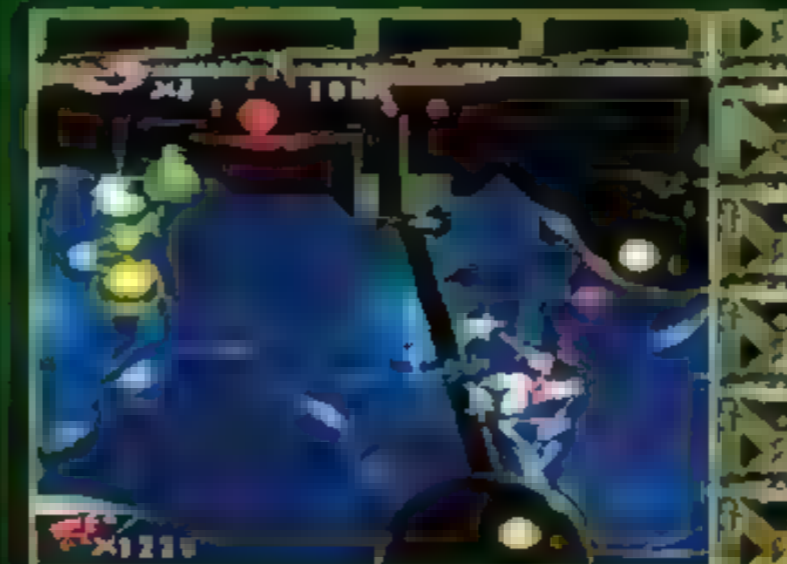
FIENDISH GOLDFISH, EVIL LAWYERS AND LOTS OF COWS - IT CAN ONLY MEAN AN ADVENTURE STARRING EARTHWORM JIM. KIM WILD FINDS OUT HOW AN ORDINARY WORM TRANSFORMED INTO SOMETHING EXTRAORDINARY

Some stories start from a seed of an idea, a plot device that is then used to create a magical world. Others germinate from the existence of one character, who then goes on to shape the world and everything around it. With Earthworm Jim, it was the character that first sprang to life and went on to influence the nature of the game that he would star in. "It's a long story, but I came up with him in November of 1993 when I was on the outs with Virgin Games," says Daug-TenNapel, designer of *Earthworm Jim* and the cast. "I was at home in my little Irvine apartment and Shiny was just starting to get up. I remember drawing while listening to Fleetwood Mac's *Rumours* and I created Jim and a number of the villains in about 45 minutes! He came out pretty much like he is today, a goofy looking worm with a muscular super suit. I did a profile-walk cycle of him because I was trying to get the job of animator. I didn't expect we would do a Jim game at that point. It was more a demonstration that I could animate and create for them in a pinch."



When Dan Castanella turned up to do Jim's voice over there was a reverent hush across the room." **KIM EYRE**

Jim would still evolve and change as the team developed the game, but the main character was all there. "At the time, Playmates Interactive Entertainment, specialists within the field of toy figures and cartoons, had seen the success of *Sonic The Hedgehog* and decided to become involved with a new videogame franchise which would then lead on to produce its own line of toys and cartoons. Playmates teamed up with Shiny Entertainment - which had already proven its skill with *Global Gladiators*, *Cool Spot* and *Aladdin* - and commissioned it with the task. The arrival of Doug gave Shiny Entertainment the opportunity it was looking for.



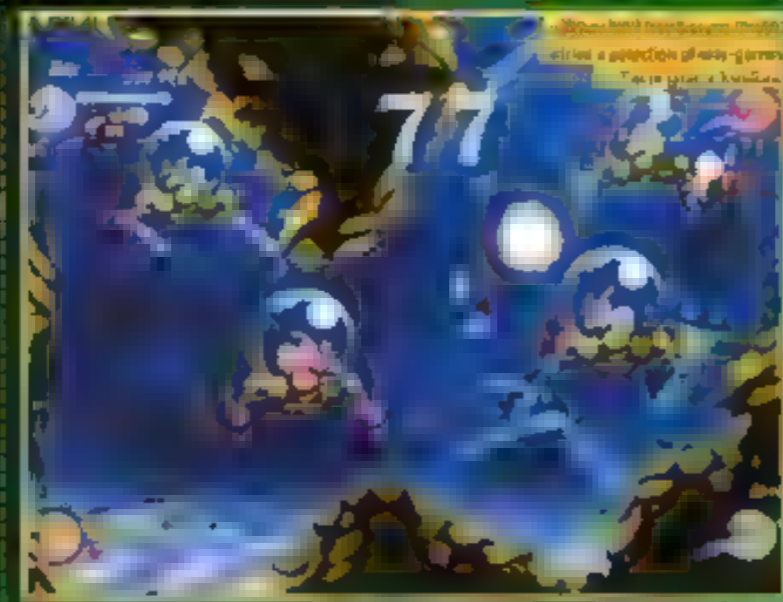
"This was early on in Shiny's life, they were pricing photocopiers and building out office space and an animation position opened up when one of the original team didn't work out," continues Daug. "I remember that they were trying to get *Dey Of The Tentacle's* Larry Ahorn to sign on and he didn't have much interest. A number of other lucky names came up that kept their doors open to me. I was good friends with Mike Dietz and Ed Schofield, the other two main animators at Shiny. They wanted me but weren't going to just throw me the job. In the end, the final tests test was going to be with Dave Perry. He was also at my original job interview at Virgin Games just four months earlier, so he'd seen my hit-and-miss portfolio. I think EWW, in combination with Mike

Dietz's recommendation, pushed me over the edge." With Earthworm Jim came an assorted cast of villains. "When I initially made EWW in that 45 minute period, I know that Psy-Crow, Major Mucus, Peter Puppy and Professor Tick-For-A-Head (later known as Professor Monkey-For-A-Head) were done in that session." With a hero and villains drawn, it was time to create a game around them and a story. Earthworm Jim was an ordinary worm until he encountered a space suit that fell from the sky, bestowing him with superhero abilities. However, the evil Psy-Crow and his cohorts were intent on retrieving the suit at all costs, so it was down to Jim to protect his newly found abilities while also saving Princess What's-Her-Name from their hands, an enigmatic nameless character whom Jim was madly in love with. When asked why the lead was a worm, Daug explains he's a fan of the underdog. "I was looking for a way to make a weak character have the opportunity to be strong. That's Elliot from *ET* or Marry McFly from *Back To The Future*. These are underlings who are given an opportunity to be bigger. I was specifically studying Warner Bros characters because their personalities were so identifiable and comedic." What makes *Earthworm Jim* stand out is the quality of the animation, reminiscent of early Chuck Jones and Tex Avery cartoons. Much like their inspirations, each episode was painstakingly hand-

draws and then re-draws as artwork on cells before scanning them into the computer. The same approach was used for the beautiful backgrounds that feature throughout all the levels, with many having slopes and twists to give the feel of a 3D environment. The emphasis on hand-drawn animation meant that artists were needed to conjure up the world.

"I remember the days when I used to do all the art on graph paper, one pixel at a time," says Dave Perry, programmer and designer of *Earthworm Jim* and its sequel. "That was actually a great time, as it allowed really rubbish artists (like myself) to survive! Once things really started animating my cover was blown, and over the following years non-artists (like me) had to put down their pencils and concede. We brought in the big guns (Nick Gray was my partner for years), and at Virgin we had their core animation team lead by Mike Dietz and he at one point even used Disney Feature Animators for our *Aladdin* game! Definitely not a fair fight for an average animator. For games, all that mattered was they wanted to see amazing graphics, fluid motion and be entertained. I think top level artists animators became a requirement and we never went back. I loved that time as I learned so much about animation from the guys."

Although Dave Perry and his team were responsible for programming and designing, Doug was allowed to contribute to the overall style of the game, a rare opportunity for the animator. "I was given the role of saying what the character would or wouldn't do. It wasn't official for anything, but I generally got to decide who he was, while the team described what this being was going to do. I



Jim arrived in the sweet spot of the Sega generation and it won lots of 'Game of the Year' awards!!

remember that Bruce was creating this Hellish looking level, and that triggered an opportunity for me to make Evil the fat the main bad guy. There would be experimentation and give-and-take, I remember disagreeing anything believing anything existed to me. We were both sharing the same goal of making a great game and trying to cram it all into this impossible small cartridge!

The different vehicles that Earthworm Jim encountered throughout his adventures, from rockets to the bathysphere, came about as the game developed. "They'd say, 'we need him

to ride a rocket', and I'd say, 'no, six-axis engines. It had to be small as the sprite didn't take up much room, so Jim's main vehicle wasn't something I came up with from the start, but now we can't imagine Jim without it," continues Doug.

Earthworm Jim was released in 1994 on the Sega Mega Drive, with a version to follow on the Super Nintendo in 1995. The SNES release has the better view style of the two, with extra background scrolling for the levels and animation for the characters, but is missing the 'Intestinal Distress' level of the Mega Drive game due to the latter having better compression abilities to store more levels. A Sega CD and Windows 95 'Special Edition' were also released, adding a new level, 'Big Bruty', improving the animation with additional frames and compatibility patches for several things with bonus extras.

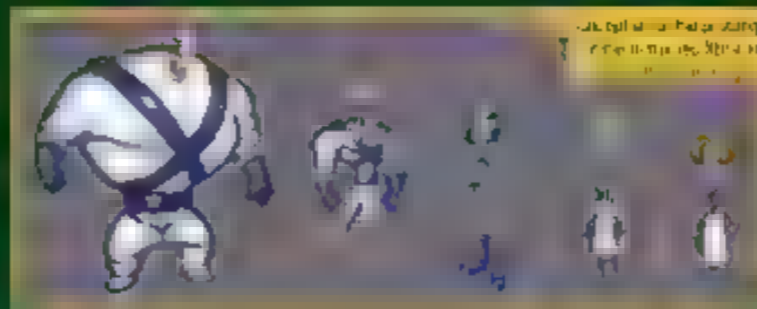
A number of handheld ports came as well, but were developed by a different company. Eurocom released a Game Boy version that left out many of the levels of the original and struggled with poor controls. Game Boy Advance received a port, although it lacked the party. Earthworm Jim was a Game Gear release which was a re-coloured version of the Game Boy game, but with cheap controls and with the almost impossible to control. The Game Boy Advance received a port, although it lacked the party.

With *Earthworm Jim* proving to be a hit with gamers and critics alike, a sequel followed and, although not as memorable as the original, was still a zany, enjoyable adventure. *Earthworm Jim* was this time accompanied by Spot, his green alien friend, who could be used as a parachute and help him swing from surfaces to surface. Although still a run-and-gun platformer it contained plenty of variety from having to rescue Peter's nephews from being tossed out of a window to playing a blind salamander culminating in a quiz at the end of the level.

The sequel also received ports for PlayStation, Saturn and PC in 1996. The former releases added 3D introductions and ending sequences but didn't try and improve on the originals, while the PC



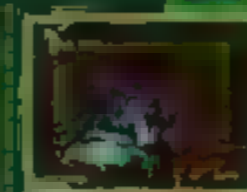
Earthworm Jim and his fellow characters in the game.



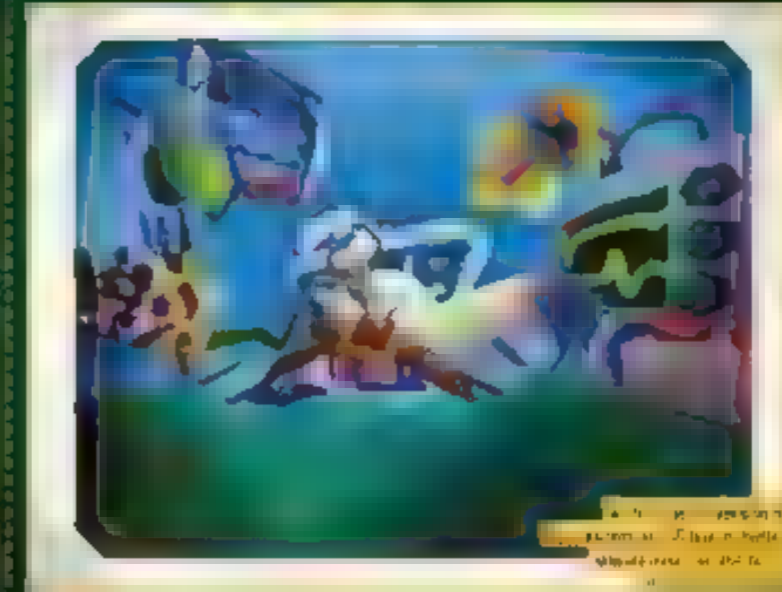
game featured upgraded graphics and audio but was missing the 'Lovers' level. While North America and Europe saw the Saturn release, only Europe received the PlayStation conversion. Once again the game would receive a Game Boy Advance port much later in 2002, but suffered from the same problems of the original with poor controls and slow character movement.

Dave Perry felt that *Earthworm Jim*'s growing appeal was also a question of timing. "Jim arrived in the sweet spot of the Sega generation and it won lots of 'Game Of The Year' awards. It was at the right place at the right time. I feel we were very lucky [that] we started when we did. My personal opinion is that the character had an interesting trait of being both weak (a worm) and strong (a suit). By combining the two it opens the door to do crazy/funny things to him."

Inevitably the late Nineties ushered in an era of 3D platformers, so it was only a matter of time before *Earthworm Jim* would make the leap into a new dimension. Shiny Entertainment had been purchased by Interplay in 1996 and the idea for a 3D game came about. Although Shiny Entertainment had started work on *MDK* and new development team VIS Interactive took on our spineless hero, Dave Perry and the team were initially consulted on the character's new direction. "After they commissioned us to produce the game, I was one of the team sent to Shiny Entertainment to work with Dave Perry and the creatives to come up with the concept for the new version," recalls Kirk Ewing, director for *Earthworm Jim 3D*. "Yet the jump from 2D to 3D proved to be far trickier than anticipated, and the introduction of a new development team proved to be a sore point. "It was a nightmare, our pencil artists had no experience on 3D packages and Interplay let another team make the 3D



Earthworm Jim playing as a blind salamander in the game.

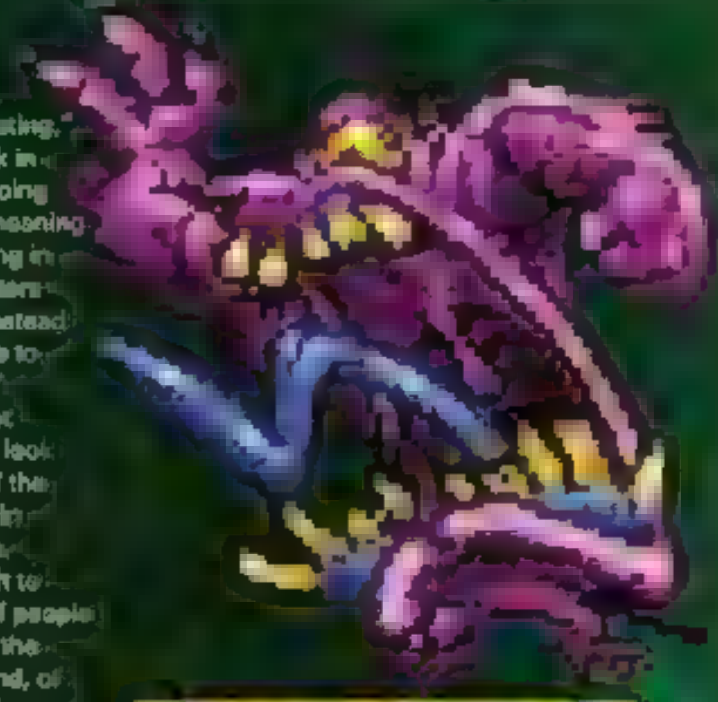


game, which our guys were just hating," remembers David. "We were stuck in the man's land; the industry was going 3D, but all our expertise was 2D, meaning really 2D, with pencil and colouring in hand-drawn cells. The core animators never made the transition to 3D, instead they switched to Clay and continue to work on clay (stop-motion) today."

It was also difficult to decide just how *Earthworm Jim* was going to look in 3D, and this proved to be one of the many reasons why the game was in development limbo for three years. "Projects like this are really difficult to manage and there's an awful lot of people with an opinion to add to the mix; the publisher, the IP owner, the fans and, of course, us—the developers," continues Kirk. "I remember, for instance, that the finished 3D model of Jim went through at least eight iterations before we found something that everyone agreed on. There were also a lot of heritage elements that just didn't translate as well into 3D (the head whip for instance). A lot of time was spent working with these things to try and make them satisfying, not always with a satisfactory outcome. *Earthworm Jim 3D* was my first experience of working on an original sequel to an existing mega-property and from 2D into 3D as well. It wasn't easy for anybody."

As a result of its prolonged development process, there were plenty of ideas that never made the final cut. "I still have drawers full of sketches for levels and bad guys for that game," laments Kirk. "My biggest regret is that I didn't get more of the original cast in there in cooler ways. I'm not doing it again. We got to make *Earthworm Jim* though, just like we said we would in the first meeting."

Although a difficult game to work on, there were still some memorable moments. "My absolute favourite thing



LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION!

If you were a popular videogame character in the Nineties then it was only a matter of time before you ended up with your own TV series. Like Mario and Sonic before him, Earthworm Jim ended up on the silver screen in 1995. Out of respect for the franchise, Universal involved Earthworm Jim's creator throughout the whole process. "I had limited approvals of the script and I designed some of the characters and new characters that showed up in each episode," explains Doug about his involvement. "Universal invited me to participate in every aspect of that show, which is pretty rare. They even started voluntarily paying me when they weren't contractually obliged to do so." Due to the cartoon nature of the character, Earthworm Jim and his fellow comrades transitioned well onto the medium of television and inspired many crazy adventures in 26 episodes, spread across two seasons.



3D WOES

Other popular characters that struggled with the move to 3D



SONIC THE HEDGEHOG
Although the *Sonic Adventure* and *Sonic Heroes* series were decent platform titles, they were plagued with unforgiving camera angles. Sonic's later escapades in *Sonic The Hedgehog* on Xbox 360 were less than impressive and *Sonic Unleashed* was possible when not forcing you to play in 3D, proving that some characters need to stay in the second dimension.



SHADOW THE HEDGEHOG
The darker persona of Sonic the Hedgehog may have fared well in the *Adventure* series, but when the time came for him to star in his own game things didn't quite go to plan. An ill-advised decision to equip the character with guns and the ability to decide whether to be good or evil led to a fragmented experience marred with clumsy controls.



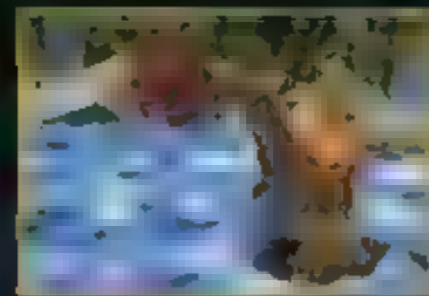
MICKEY MOUSE
Once the glowing star of the *Walt Disney* series and the enjoyable *Mickey's Wild Adventure*, the character never captured the 3D world with *Epic Mickey*. The first game was full of nice ideas but struggled with a wobbly camera, while the recent sequel failed to build on the original's concept. Hopefully the *Castle Of Illusion* remake will be a return to form for Mickey.



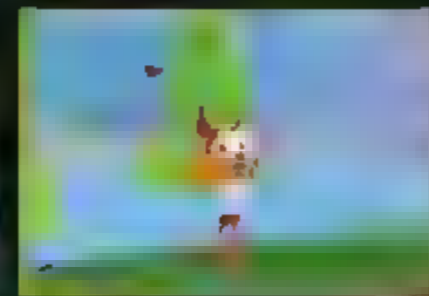
FROGGER
As a game that was never conceived as a platformer, the decision to make *Frogger* a 3D platformer was an extremely strange one of the franchise and didn't fare well at all. *Frogger 3: Great Quest* (it really wasn't) and *Ancient Shores* were past shovels for the amphibian, and even 3D remakes of the original 2D idea lose something in translation.



MALICE
One of those titles that was in development hell for years - eventually switching from one generation to another - Malice's debut struggled with poor level design, very forgettable worlds and, once again, a dynamic camera that was very difficult to control. It wasn't a bad game, but did little to add to an otherwise overcrowded genre.



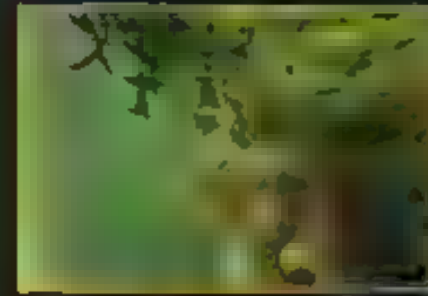
PITFALL HARRY
Pitfall Harry entered the difficult third dimension in the *Last Expedition* and the *Big Adventure*, which were possible if not all that memorable platform-style games. To his credit, *Big Adventure* featured rope climbing and plenty of trap dodging which were a couple of the trademarks of the series from its stellar 8-bit era during the Eighties.



BUBSY
While he was never going to threaten Sonic's crown, Bubsy's first outing on the Sega Mega Drive was a solid little time-waster with his own identity. Competing with the release of *Super Mario 64* was never going to be easy, but the release of *Bubsy 3D* showcased a world of poor controls, terrible camera work and repeat visuals. Sorry Bubs.



THE JAM AND EARL
The lumpy alien duo crashed onto the Sega Mega Drive in several groovy adventures and inevitably made the leap to 3D on the Xbox. Despite a valiant attempt to build on the original game's enjoyable concepts, *Ten Year And Earl III: Mission To Earth* received a mixed reception from critics and fans and attained poor sales worldwide upon release.



KIM THE KANGAROO
As horses go, a leading kangaroo is certainly a little different to the normal platform character, but unfortunately he still struggled to stand out from the crowd. While his *Return* was sold admirably, despite being fairly average, the sequel didn't fare as well and failed to endear him to platform videogame fans.



PAC-MAN
His cartoonish, cute, colorful and iconic character has been closed by ghosts. Pac-Man decided to give the 3D platform a try and with mixed results. The *Pac-Man World* series had some nice ideas but struggled with camera issues. Ironically, the hidden 3D maps are the highlight over the main adventure, proving that sometimes the original ideas are best.



CRASH BANDICOOT
The excitable & lovable marsupial captured hearts with the PlayStation games, but future releases in the form of *Turnaway*, *Crash Of The Titans* and *Mind Over Mutant* as fully-fledged 3D games had mixed results. As videogame icons go, he is still a family favourite and will no doubt reappear eventually.



CURIOUS GEORGE AND REMONNET SCHEMER
Curious George (2006), *Curious and Remonnet* (2007) carry on the vampire killing tradition passed down by the Belmonts. After *Super Contra* (2004) this game on N64 struggled with control and content problems and was a dump punishment to critics and fans. The recent *Contra* on Xbox 360 and PS3 fared much better.

...was working with the voice talent, explains Kirk. "When Dan Castellaneta turned up to do Jim's voiceover there was a reverberated hush across the room. Not for long though, he's russ!"

As examples of 3D games go, there were certainly worse ones on the market and, while the game had its problems with difficult controls, an unresponsive camera and fairly ordinary level design, it did a decent job at retaining the off-the-wall humour the series was renowned for. When it comes down to why *Earthworm Jim* floundered in 3D, Kirk admits that it was never meant for the character. "Earthworm Jim was designed as a 2D character from the outset - everything about it; the backdrops, the animations, the supporting characters, all existed in an essence 2D world and some elements just could not be convincingly translated into the 3D world. This meant a lot of rethinks on what was going to work. If I'd really had my way back then I'd have made it look even more like *Abe's Oddysee*."

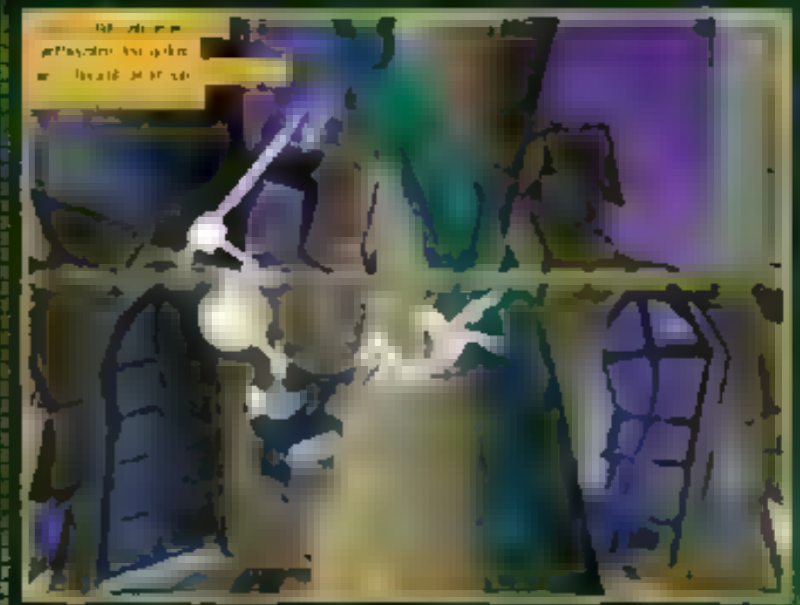
Understandably, the game received a mixed reception among gamers. The fan-base and critics struggled with the unresponsive camera and felt it was average and uninspiring, especially when competing with high profile games such as *Rayman 2* and *Super Mario 64*. Despite everything, Kirk Ewing felt the criticism was fair. "It wasn't as good as it should have been. I loved the first game and I wanted it to be better. You take criticism in context of what was possible and I try to learn from your mistakes. That said, I've given the game to

...of younger kids since then and they've really liked it. Little kids are stupid like that."

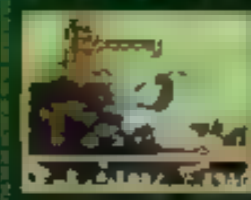
Yet 3D wasn't the only problem that Earthworm Jim had to contend with. He was also the star of a slide-scrolling platformer for the Game Boy Color called *Earthworm Jim 2: Maniacs 2 The Galaxy* in 1998. Once again the game lacked the inventiveness of its predecessors and focused more on collecting coins than platforming. Awkward controls and poor level design meant it was an experience better left on the shelves.

After Earthworm Jim's 8-bit dalliance with the third dimension, it was time for our hero to hang up his space suit and burrow underground, resurfacing occasionally to cameo as a secret character in *Battle Arena* (Toshinden (PC)) and a playable fighter in *ClayFighter 63 1/2*. There were moments when it looked like Earthworm Jim would make a comeback - in 2003 concept art for a prototype game were released for a PlayStation 2 and Xbox release.

In 2006, a PSP version of the game went into development, and although early screenshots suggested that it was a remake of the original, it was promised to be a new adventure featuring new environments, Super Suit Overdrive power and an expanded range of moves and attacks. Unfortunately, publisher Atari, owners to the rights of the franchise at the time, hit economic difficulties and development came to a halt.



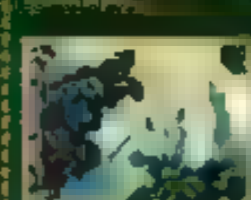
...I remember drawing while listening to Fleetwood Mac and I created Jim and a number of villains in 45 minutes! DOUG TENNAPEL



...I'll see that I pulled content from the Earthworm Adventure 3D game to put in the remaster.



...I'll see that I pulled content from the Earthworm Adventure 3D game to put in the remaster.

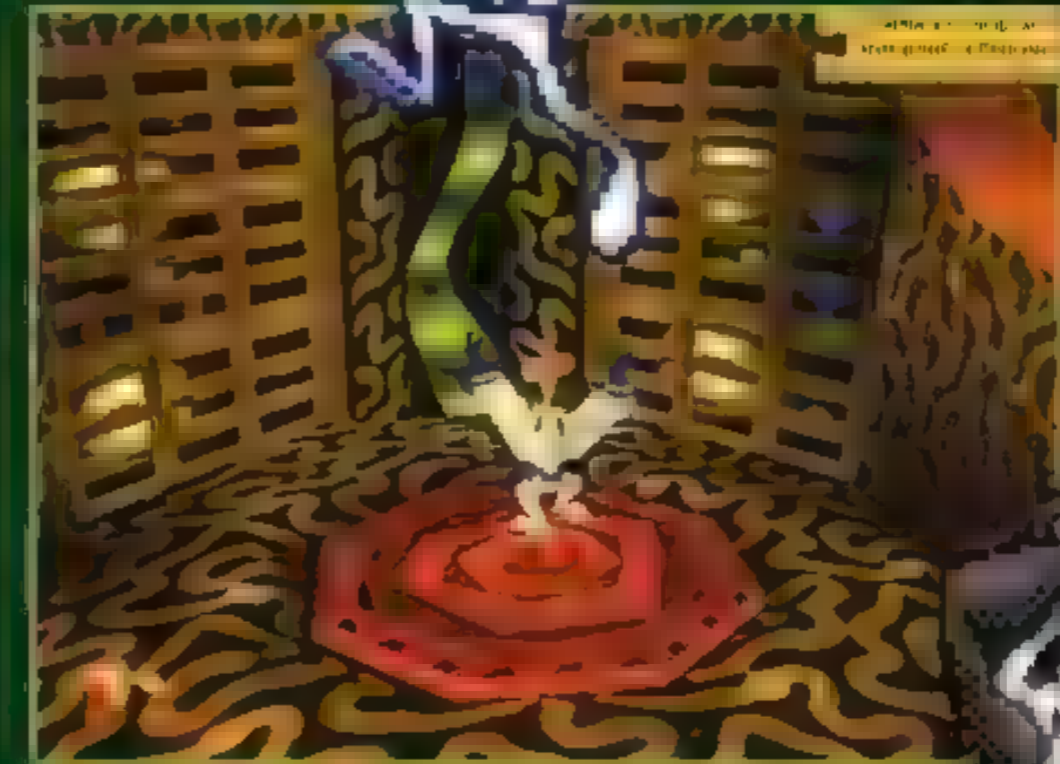


...I'll see that I pulled content from the Earthworm Adventure 3D game to put in the remaster.

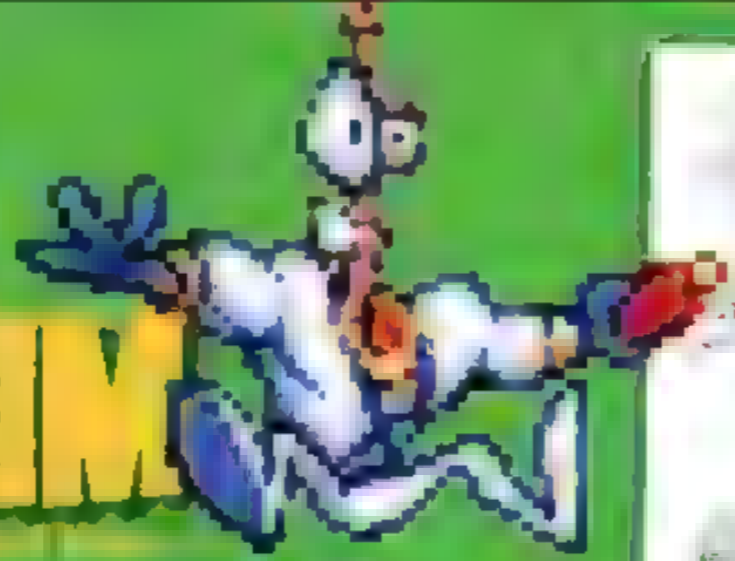
With the exception of Gameloft's recent HD remake on Xbox Live Arcade and PSN, the prospect of another Earthworm Jim appearance is slim and a fourth game even more unlikely. "We have talked about it many times but the team members all have successful careers doing their own things now," remarks Dave Perry. "It's not impossible, but it's not likely for the time being."

The legacy of Earthworm Jim may be over, but his adventures still live on fondly in the minds of gamers and in the hearts of those who brought him to life. "In the end, I make art for other people and Earthworm Jim moved a lot of people to love a creation that I don't entirely feel worthy of," comments Doug. "In the end, it's not about me. What I make has a life of its own and what it becomes is not a reflection of my own power or ability. I'm just happy that something I was involved in put a smile on so many faces. It's entirely possible that nothing else I make will have the same effect on so many people. In some ways, I never thought so many people shared my tastes in what I thought was funny or interesting. We're all living at the right place and at the right time for me to not only make Jim but for so many people to enjoy it."

Many thanks to Katherine Gerner of Rocketworm (www.rocketworm.com) for providing concept art and sprites for this feature. Thanks to Dave Perry, Doug Tennapel, Kirk Ewing and Mike Dietz for their time.



THE ART OF EARTHWORM JIM



OF EARTHWORM JIM

Down TenNapel and Mike Day
art and the game's popu

DT I
ORIGINALLY
TOOK JIM'S
FORM AND
TRACED HIM
OVER EVERY
WARNER BROS
MODEL SHEET
I COULD FIND
TO SEE HOW
HE WOULD
MOVE SO TO
FIND THIS
EXTREME
DRAWING OF
DAFFY DUCK,
THEN TO HANG
EWJ OVER
THAT POSE

EARTHWORM
JIM



• MD: Another random sketch, showing his head exploring the character.



• MD: This is one of a set of rough sketches I did when I was exploring images for a print ad I ended up doing a finished illustration of this pose for a magazine cover. Afterward Mike TenNapel did another painting based on this pose. His illustration was 'way better than mine!' and then a digital version of this pose ended up in the game. So you get a lot of mileage out of this one, basically. It's one of my least favorite drawings I ever did of Jim. Always preferred the heavy Jim over the 'tough guy' character.

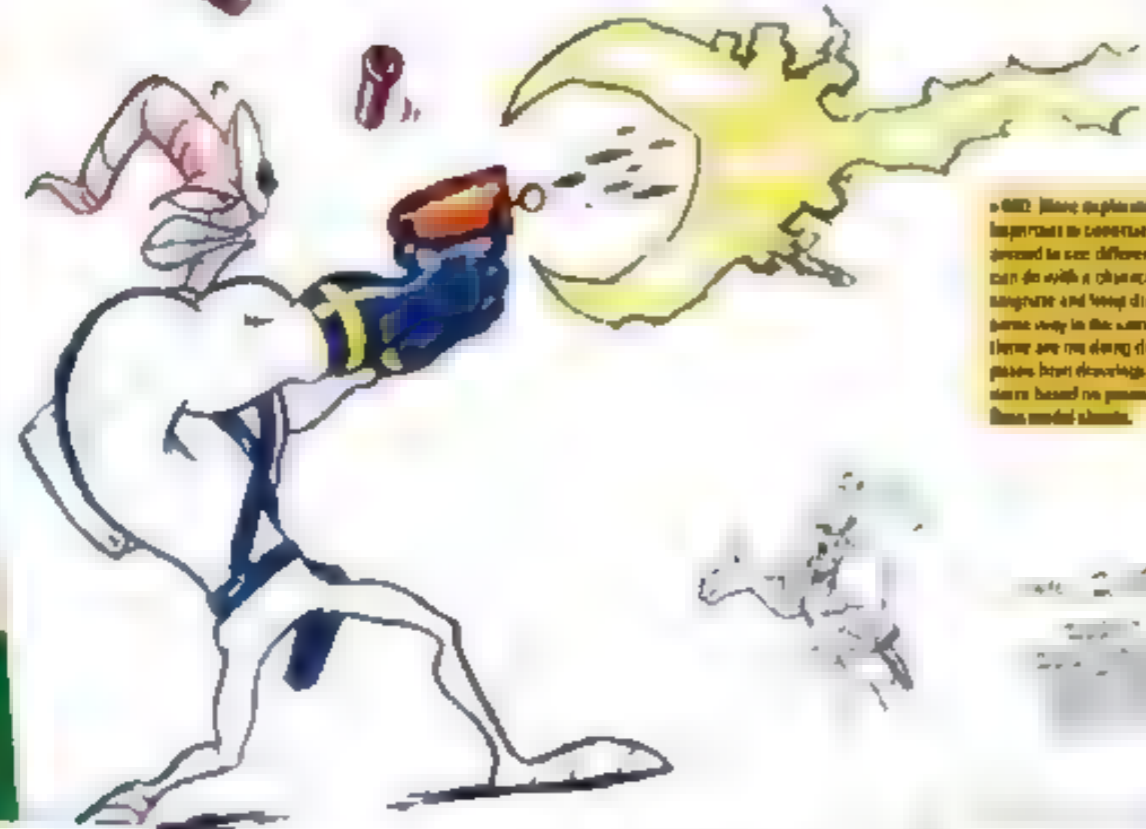


Psy-Crow

Peter
PUPPY



DT IF YOU THINK OF THE
CONTRAST I WAS CREATING
IN JIM BEING POWERFUL BUT
WEAK, PETER PUPPY REFLECTED
THAT IN HIS GOOD NATURED
INNOCENCE THAT TURNED INTO
A HORRIBLE SPACE MONSTER AT
ANY SECOND.



• MD: More explanatory sketches. It's important to consider something you can do with a character vs you don't integrate and keep drawing him the same way in the same poses. Some of these are my doing drawings based on previous work drawings by TenNapel, which were based on poses from old Warner Bros model sheets.

Queen Atealing Bloated,
Festering, Swoaty, Pus-filled, Mal-
formed, Slug for a Butt



DT IN ADDITION TO
BEING AN AMPHIBIAN
FAN, I ALSO LOVE THE
ANATOMY OF INSECTS.
I STARTED HER
CREATION WITH THE
BLOATED ABDOMEN
OF A TERMITE QUEEN.
THAT WAS THE
GROSSEST THING I
COULD THINK OF IN
THE ANIMAL KINGDOM.



• MD: This was a concept sketch I did for a pose to be illustrated for an E! TV commercial. I ended up covering a pencil test of Jim (grabbing his head and whipping the camera back on this pose).

• MD: More Jim dances. Just having fun, probably doing a boxing routine.

• MD: Another sketchbook drawing. Again, was just having fun doodling Jim. It's a good example to date.

• MD: These were some concept sketches from my sketchbook as playing things you could do with the worm.

• MD: More drawings from my sketchbook. They don't serve any specific purpose. I just enjoyed making Jim and did it whenever I got the chance.

IMPORT ONLY

INFO

EVOLUTION OF THE GENRE

RELEASING 1987
Link's debut was a staggering first back in the day a sprawling fantasy adventure the likes of which simply shouldn't have been possible on 8-bit hardware. It was here that many of the standards and features of both series and genre were first established.

EVOLUTION OF THE GENRE

RELEASING 2011
This disturbing top-down adventure from Super Meat Boy creator Edmund McMillen has a distinct Zelda vibe about it, although it also mixes in random generation and roguelike elements to ensure that no two playthroughs are ever the same. An updated version of the game is due for release next year.

RELEASING 2011
This disturbing top-down adventure from Super Meat Boy creator Edmund McMillen has a distinct Zelda vibe about it, although it also mixes in random generation and roguelike elements to ensure that no two playthroughs are ever the same. An updated version of the game is due for release next year.

CD-ORIGINATES IN N. AM. P.



KAERU NO TAME NI KANE WA NARU

IT LOOKS LIKE A ZELDA GAME, SOUNDS LIKE A ZELDA GAME AND WITHOUT IT, THERE MIGHT NOT EVEN HAVE BEEN A ZELDA GAME ON GAME BOY. LUKE ALBIGÉS REVISITS THE JAPAN-ONLY ADVENTURE THAT PAVED THE WAY FOR LINK'S AWAKENING

Id you ever play a *Zelda* game and think to yourself 'yeah, it was okay, but it could have done with a few more frogs'? Of course you didn't. Nobody did. Still, just as in any good episode of *Dragon's Den*, we're here with a solution to a problem that doesn't exist. Only in this case, said solution involves you getting to play a great game you've most likely never even heard of before. Despite its low profile in the West (on account of not being released here), *Kaeru No Tame Ni Kane Wa Naru* – or *For The Frog The Bell Tolls*, to give the game its translated title – has pedigree behind it as well as influence beyond. And while it's perhaps not exactly a classic in its own right, this amphibian adventure has a place in the history books as the game that laid the foundations for Link to go handheld.

You see, the engine at the heart of *For The Frog The Bell Tolls* is an early version of the one that would later



Game Boy Color: *For The Frog The Bell Tolls*. One of the secret of great game design is to give a frog a starring role!

be used for *Link's Awakening*, the first portable *Zelda* game and one of the best games in the franchise. But as much as its design would inform the later *Zelda* game, it is also informed by previous ones. While *A Link To The Past* would return to the template of the original, *For The Frog The Bell Tolls* instead takes its cues from *Zelda II*. The top-down viewpoint works wonders for world map navigation, but dungeon exploration takes the form of several side-scrolling sections – a format that the Game Boy *Zelda* debut would also use.

One key difference, though, is that *For The Frog The Bell Tolls* doesn't really have a combat system per se. You



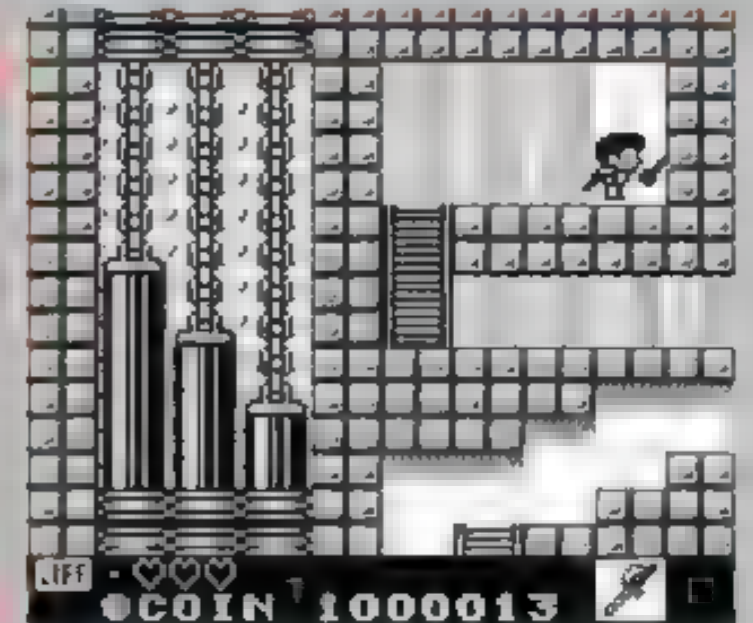
The engine at the heart of *For The Frog The Bell Tolls* is an early version of the one that would later be used for *Link's Awakening*

approach an enemy and the entire battle takes place in a dust cloud, outside of your control. Life is slowly sapped from both player and enemy based on attack and defence ratings until only one is left standing – regular enemies go down pretty easy but in the case of boss fights, you need to have the best gear available and a full life bar in order to come out on top. It's a simple system but one that controls progress brilliantly, even if the lack of interaction may not be ideal. The same mechanic would later be used in DS oddity *Freshly-Picked: Tingle's Rosy Rupeeland* – a rare example of a spin-off borrowing from the inspiration rather than the source material.

Going into *For The Frog The Bell Tolls* after several years of playing *Zelda*, you'd find it hard to miss the various similarities. Mechanically, it's extremely similar, from the basic structure to the equipment menu. Music, while courtesy of a different composer, is also pretty close and the rest of the audio, including those little fanfares when you pick up something valuable, is on the same page too. Animation is so close that some of the same routines are actually reused in *Link's Awakening* – Link's death spin is common in *For The Frog The Bell Tolls*, while there are countless other *deja vu* moments waiting for anyone who has served their time with the Wind Fish.



While many may disagree, this is a game that is highly entertaining by the way of the way it is played. It is a game that even without the *Zelda* setting and similar prices, it's still one of the best games in the series. *Gameplay* was adapted to directly accommodate the small screen format of the Game Boy Color. The game is a great example of how to make a game that is both fun and challenging. It is a game that is worth playing for anyone who is a fan of the *Zelda* series.



Game Boy: The *Zelda* II dungeons take the form of side-scrolling sections. You can jump and climb freely, though the use of the *Meatballs* is unchanged.



Game Boy: Using a fire sword, you're in the hospital. There's no penalty for death beyond having to refill missing hearts, so explore away!

Too many great Japan-only games will never be enjoyed by many Western players due to the language barrier, so it's with mad respect for the people responsible that we get to say that there's a brilliant fan translation out there for *Kaeru No Tame Ni Kane Wa Naru*. It's perfectly playable without, as long as you don't mind missing out on some of the nuance and most of the characters being named after puddings. But this is an important slice of gaming history – if the dedication of a fan translating and re-coding the entire script can help educate and entertain more people, we can't see how that could ever be construed as a negative.

Any *Zelda* fan owes it to themselves to check out *For The Frog The Bell Tolls*. It's a simpler game than most of Link's outings but looks, feels and plays like a proof of concept for one of the best games in the series. Hands-off battles stand out for being entertaining if not involving, a method that games like *Assassin's Creed* still employ to this day. Side-scrolling sections are nice, though you'd expect no less with *Metroid* veteran Makoto Kanoh on board. And neat gameplay gimmicks like allowing the player to transform into various animals (no, not just frogs) elevate this to something more impressive, something more important than it might otherwise be. As the missing link in the *Zelda* timeline, fans would do well to befriend a few frogs and fill in the gaps in their knowledge in the process.

MYTH

HISTORY IN THE MAKING

SYSTEM 3'S TALE OF MAGICAL INTRIGUE AND MYSTERY TAKES PLACE OVER - LITERALLY - THOUSANDS OF YEARS. GRAEME MASON EXPLORES THE CREATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THIS CLASSIC ACTION-ADVENTURE

BY 1986, SYSTEM 3 SOFTWARE HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED FOR SIX YEARS AND WAS ALREADY WELL-KNOWN FOR GAMES SUCH AS THE BEAT-'EM-UP INTERNATIONAL KARATE AND THE EXCELLENT BONES OF LAST NINJA GAMES ON COMMODORE 64. Eager to stop up production, owner Mark Cole had already begun overseeing the development of many more projects, mostly in line with his ethos of producing original gaming experiences rather than games based on licensed properties - a trend that was becoming increasingly common.

One such project was *Myth: History In The Making*, and Mark himself explains to us the initial idea. "I wanted to construct a game using stories that people could identify with, something well-known, as we began researching myths such as the Hydra, Medusa and the Norse legends with the idea of putting them into a game." The basic format for *Myth* would ultimately work as follows: after an initial level set in Hades, the player, a contemporary hero summoned through time to do battle with an evil demon, is transported to several different eras including ancient Greece (400 BC),



Scandinavia (800 AD) and Egypt (3000 BC). In order to proceed to the present day and a final showdown with the main villain, Daemeron, the levels had to be traversed, puzzles had to be solved and each end of level guardian (a famous mythical creature perverted to evil by Daemeron) had to be defeated.



Work began on *Myth* in 1988, with development taking just over a year in total for this 8-bit computer. The programmer and graphic artist team of Pete Baran and Bob Stevenson worked on the original Commodore 64 version. "Bob and I had just finished a conversion of Konami's *Salamander*," begins Pete, "and it went down pretty well. So my agent, Jacques Lyons, hooked us up with System 3 and Mark Cole for its next project." Pete was handed a document detailing how System 3 imagined *Myth* that could traverse "It wasn't great, truth be told, and largely a sprawling collection of mythological research jammed into an ordinary platform game." After plucking up the courage, Pete and Bob approached Mark Cole with their reservations; fortunately, the System 3 chief agreed and listened keenly



to the new design offered by them. Pete explains: "We thought they'd gone too in-depth. Our impression was that if the myths were not pretty much common knowledge then they would be too obscure for a lot of players. So we went out and bought a few children's books, with one title from Penguin I remember being particularly useful for source material. Anything aimed at pre-teens we saw as being full of perfect stuff to put into the game." The design produced by the programming team was based around key puzzles that required either the aforementioned ubiquitous mythological knowledge or some old-fashioned exploration and experimentation. Each section was to include one or two puzzles with three sections per level and four levels in total. This, mixed in with awardplay, shooting action and platforming, would make up the gameplay for *Myth*. There was no doubting the team's ambition.

Over on the ZX Spectrum and Amstrad, coding duties were handled by Creative Reality's Neil Dodwell, with colleague Dave Dew working on the graphics. "Together with Jess Austin we were working for Maniac writing games such as *Nemesis*, *The Werlock*, *Tarzan* and *Rex*," says Neil.



THE OTHER MYTH

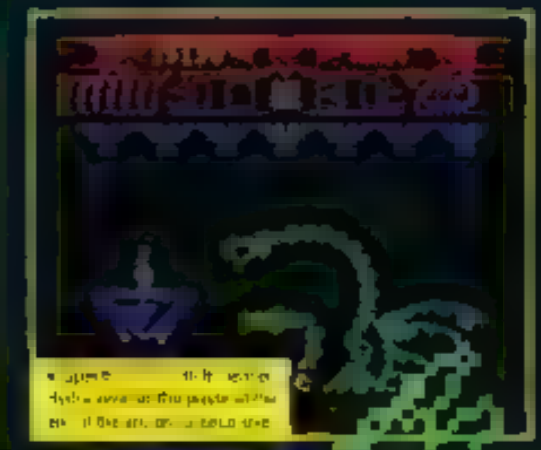
Earlier in 1988, famous adventure publisher Magnetic Scrolls released *Myth*, a small adventure sold only to members of an Adventurer's Club called Official Secrets. We say sold, it was actually given away free and produced as a *Crash* Smash in the process. The game focused on just one legend, that of the Greek Gods - specifically Poseidon - whom the player took control of. Thanks to its limited release, the Magnetic Scrolls game remains relatively obscure and is one of the many famed TIA games on websites like World Of Spectrum. "We were never aware of any other game called *Myth*," admits Mark Cole. "I found *Myth* with the headline *History In The Making* because we felt that phrase was perfect, considering the design of our game."



AS I WANTED TO CONSTRUCT A GAME USING STORIES THAT PEOPLE COULD IDENTIFY WITH

"The time for us wasn't really gaming enough and considered it time for a change. Then one day, someone recommended we talk to this agent." The agent in question was none other than Jacques Lyons, and within a few days of meeting Jacques, Dave and Neil were also on board the *Myth* project. "System 3 seemed to be a pretty cool company to work for. I remember Mark Cole was driving a Ferrari; I turned up to meetings in my Ford Capri!" laughs Neil. However, even the design document rejigged by Pete Baran and Bob Stevenson failed to excite Dave and Neil. "It was written essentially for the Commodore 64 and didn't seem to be something we could reproduce for the Spectrum. So we simply decided to interpret it as best we could."

Despite the technical limitations of the ZX Spectrum, Creative Reality's experience on the Sinclair machine served them very well when it came to *Myth*. "Jess [Austin] had tried this technique in *Nemesis*



YES! I would like to subscribe to Retro Gamer

YOUR DETAILS

Title _____ First name _____

Surname _____

Address _____

Postcode _____ Country _____

Telephone number _____

Mobile number _____

Email address _____

(Please complete your email address to receive news and special offers from us)

DIRECT DEBIT PAYMENT

I will receive my first 3 issues for £3, I will then pay only £22.50 every 6 issues thereafter.

<p>Instruction to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Direct Debit</p>	
<p>Name and full postal address of your bank or building society</p> <p>To: The branch</p> <p>Full building society</p> <p>Address</p> <p>Postcode</p> <p>Branch or account reference</p> <p>Branch sort code</p> <p>Branch name</p> <p>Branch address</p>	<p>Originator's identification number</p> <p>5 0 1 2 0 0</p> <p>Address number</p> <p>Authorisation for your bank or building society</p> <p>We have been authorised to debit your bank or building society account in full for the amount stated on this Direct Debit instruction. We will not debit your account if you have notified us in writing that you do not wish to authorise this instruction. We will not debit your account if you have notified us in writing that you do not wish to authorise this instruction. We will not debit your account if you have notified us in writing that you do not wish to authorise this instruction.</p> <p>Signature</p> <p>Date</p>

PAYMENT DETAILS

YOUR EXCLUSIVE READER PRICE 1 YEAR (13 ISSUES)

UK £51.90 (Save 20%) Europe - £70.00 World - £80.00

Cheque

I enclose a cheque for £ _____

(made payable to Imagine Publishing Ltd)

Credit/Debit Card

Visa Mastercard Amex Maestro

Card number _____ Expiry date _____

Security number _____ (last three digits on the strip at the back of the card)

Issue number _____ (if Maestro)

Signed _____

Date _____

Code: PJF120

Please tick if you do not wish to receive any promotional material from Imagine Publishing Ltd by post by telephone or via email

Please tick if you do not wish to receive any promotional material from other companies by post by telephone or via email. Please tick if you DO wish to receive such information via email

Terms & Conditions apply. We publish 13 issues a year, your subscription will start from the next available issue unless otherwise indicated. Direct Debit guarantee details available on request. This offer expires without notice. I would like my subscription to start from issue _____

Saving of 25% is based on standard cover price of £4.99

Return this order form to: Retro Gamer Subscriptions Department, 800 Guillat Avenue, Kent Science Park, Sittingbourne ME9 8GU or email it to retrogamer@servicehelpline.co.uk

You can manage your subscription account online at www.imaginesubs.co.uk



**FANTASTIC
SUBSCRIBER
OFFER**

Subscribe today and
get your first three
issues for £3



Terms & Conditions:

Subscription is for 13 issues per year. Payment is by Direct Debit. We reserve the right to substitute any issue in the event of a reprint or if an issue is unavailable. We will not substitute an issue if you have notified us in writing that you do not wish to authorise this instruction. We will not substitute an issue if you have notified us in writing that you do not wish to authorise this instruction. We will not substitute an issue if you have notified us in writing that you do not wish to authorise this instruction.

**3 ISSUES OF
RETRO GAMER
FOR JUST £3**



Get your first 3 issues for just
£3, then **save 25%** on the
shop price

THREE EASY WAYS TO SUBSCRIBE

1. Online

www.imaginesubs.co.uk/ret
And enter PJF120

2. Telephone

0844 848 8412
And quote PJF120

3. Post or email

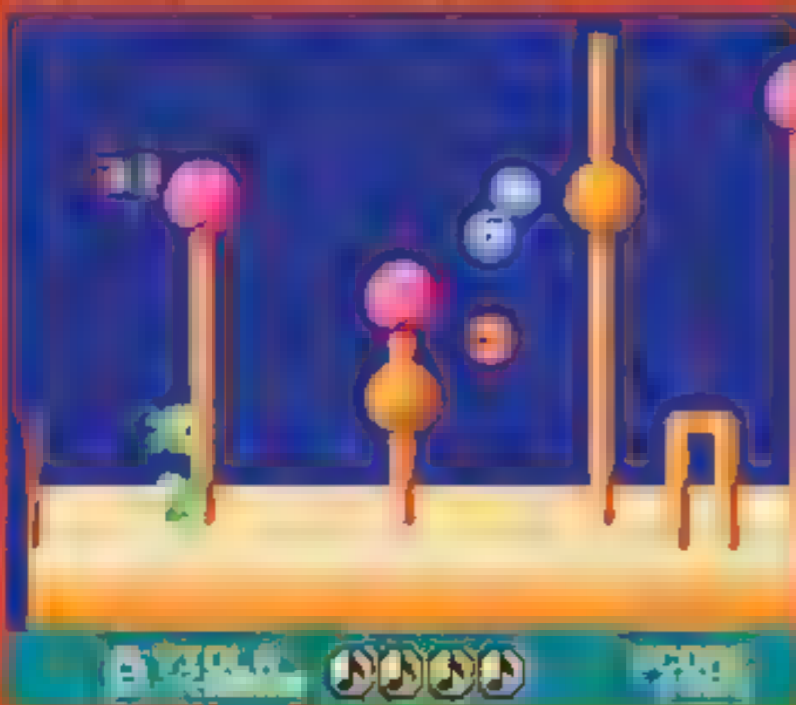
Please complete and post the form to
Retro Gamer Subscriptions Department
800 Guillat Avenue
Kent Science Park
Sittingbourne
ME9 8GU

Or alternatively, you can scan and email the form to
retrogamer@servicehelpline.co.uk

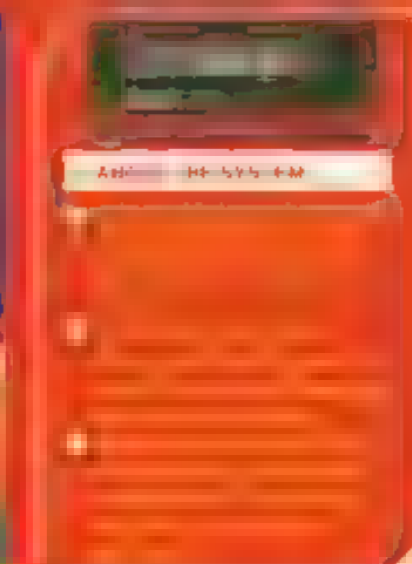
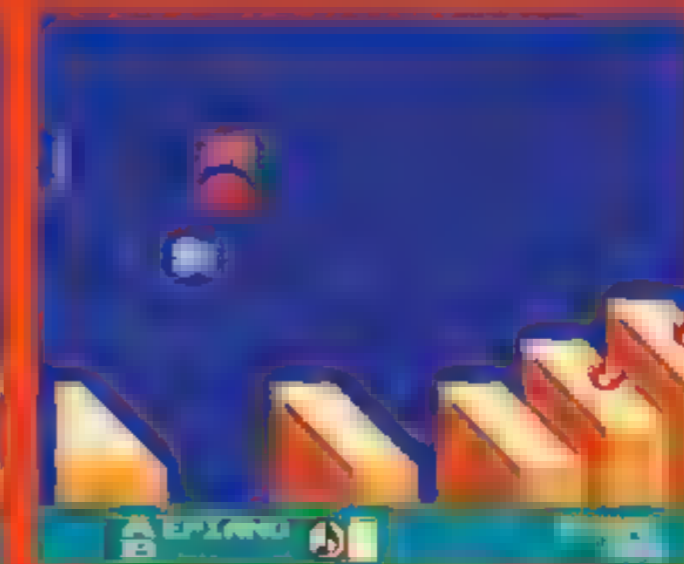
Minority Report



OTOCKY



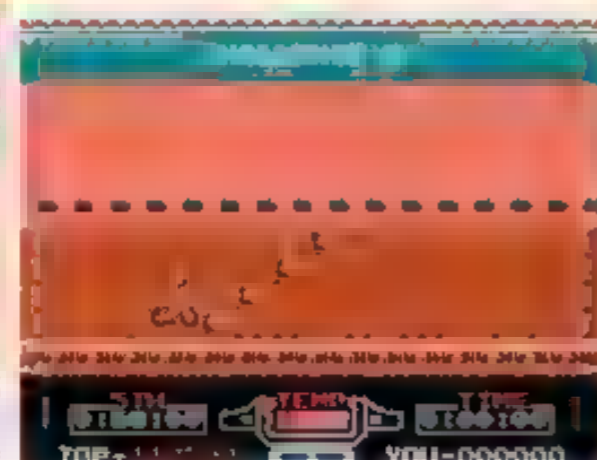
» Released in Japan as part of a Famicom Disk System promotion – which allowed owners to write new lives on their existing disks – this enhanced port of *Mano Bros* showcases revised gameplay, lightened controls, additional cutscenes and the ability to save your score. Interestingly, *Mano Bros Classic* – a minority cartridge release to Nintendo's 8-bit console – is based on this version, rather than the fourth American Hit Squad game, most likely down to the fact that it boasts better controls. Because it was only available via the Disk Adapter, this is an incredibly rare title.



» AI SENSHI N'COL

DEVELOPER: NINJA © YEAR: 1987

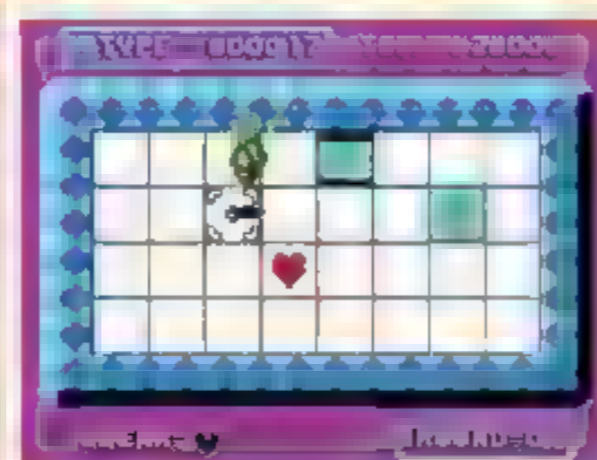
Loosely translated as *I Love Wario N'Col*, this action title shares similarities with the top-down shooting segment shooter *Yami Cliviera* – another game by Konami. The player is required to track down three diamonds on the game's seven eclectic stages, each of which is led by a different boss character. By collecting items at a futuristic space suit, the player can cross certain obstacles and avoid making heavy damage. Strikingly attractive for an 8-bit title released in 1987, *Ai Senshi N'Col* has since been released on mobile phones in Japan but remains largely unknown in the West. Despite its desirable status as a Konami echo game.



» VS EXCITE BIKE

DEVELOPER: KONAMI © YEAR: 1987

Not to be confused with the 1984 arcade version – which carried the same title – *Vs Excite Bike* is available in its entirety as a two-player mode which allows friendly competition between chums. Players can pick the track they wish to race on, the amount of rounds needed to decide the winner and the number of laps taken. Furthermore, user-generated tracks can be saved to the Famicom Disk System format, thanks to the rewritable nature of the console's media. *Vs Excite Bike* is arguably one of the best versions of the game, thanks to its two-player mode and its customisable nature, is well-suited to the console.



» KNIGHT MOVE

DEVELOPER: NINJA © YEAR: 1987

Created by Alexey Pajitnov – better known as the man behind *Tetris* – *Knight Move* is a puzzle title that is based around the L-shape movement of a knight piece in a game of chess. The objective is to remove six pieces from the board and the challenge lies in avoiding a nasty fall down, a rule you've probably encountered in the console. *Knight Move* is collectable largely due to the legendary status of its creator. Not to be confused with Microsoft's 1995 Windows-based puzzle *Knight Moves*, which is based on the Famicom Disk System title but had no input from the original creator.



» KAETTE KITA MARJEROS

DEVELOPER: NINJA © YEAR: 1987

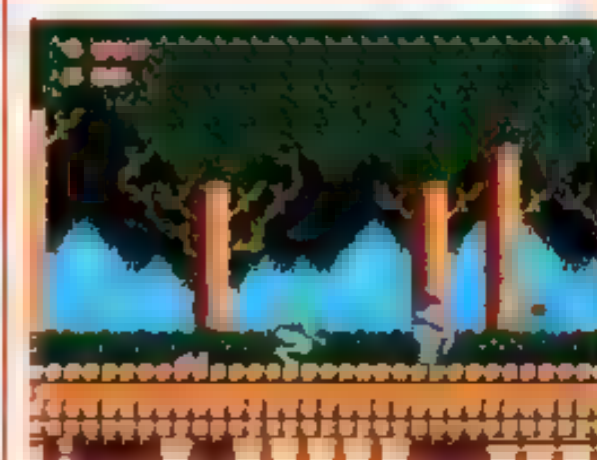
Released in Japan as part of a Famicom Disk System promotion – which allowed owners to write new lives on their existing disks – this enhanced port of *Mano Bros* showcases revised gameplay, lightened controls, additional cutscenes and the ability to save your score. Interestingly, *Mano Bros Classic* – a minority cartridge release to Nintendo's 8-bit console – is based on this version, rather than the fourth American Hit Squad game, most likely down to the fact that it boasts better controls. Because it was only available via the Disk Adapter, this is an incredibly rare title.



» BO MIRACLE POKUTTE UPA

DEVELOPER: NINJA © YEAR: 1987

An action platformer with a catty as the lead character, *Bo-Miracle Sakutte Upa* launches as a Famicom Disk System exclusive in 1988 but would at first be its way to the standard Famicom in 1989. It was slated for release in the West, but Nintendo America blocked the move. The game's lofty status ensured that it eventually arrived in the Wii Virtual Console in 2006, although it should be noted that this version is based on the cartridge edition, which lacks the additional audio channel present in the Famicom Disk System original. Cute and playable, this is a must-have purchase for the disk system library.



» MONTY NO DOK DOK DA SASSO

DEVELOPER: NINJA © YEAR: 1987

Based on Grenlin's *Monty On The Run*, *Monty No Dok Dok Da Sasso* substitutes the main character for a human and transports the action from England to a collection of forgotten temples. Despite the changes – and the obscure nature of the Japanese release – *Monty No Dok Dok Da Sasso* remains an intriguing platformer and serves as an excellent example of how popular Western games can be altered to suit the tastes of Japanese audiences. Needless to say, a game about a mole escaping from the Miner's Strike may have been lost on Famicom owners on the other side of the world.

Minority Report

NAZO NO MURASAME JŌ



DEVELOPER: YUZO © YEAR: 1997

This sequel to the 1986 arcade game *Murasame Jō* is a vertically scrolling shooter. The game was released on the Sega Game Gear handheld. A highly entertaining blast!

FALSION

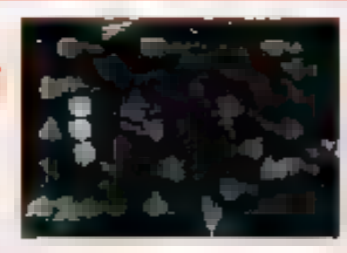


DEVELOPER: HUMANBOND © YEAR: 1995

A first-person RPG similar to *Wizardry* and *Dungeon Master*. *Deep Dungeon* started an entire series that continues to be popular in Japan even today.

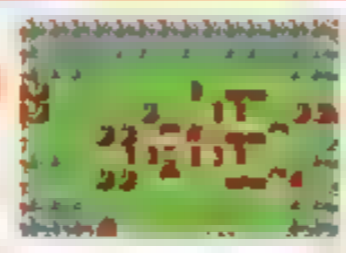
DEVELOPER: YUZO © YEAR: 1997

The sequel to the 1986 arcade game *Murasame Jō* is a vertically scrolling shooter. The game was released on the Sega Game Gear handheld. A highly entertaining blast!



DEVELOPER: ADAMI © YEAR: 1997

An educational action game that features equations and fractions. Super boy Allan's main character traverses a Zeidenka world in search of a cure for his beloved sister.



DEVELOPER: HUMANBOND © YEAR: 1995

A first-person RPG similar to *Wizardry* and *Dungeon Master*. *Deep Dungeon* started an entire series that continues to be popular in Japan even today.



DEVELOPER: KONAMI © YEAR: 1997

A music-creation game which shipped with a 36-button keyboard-style device for composing tunes. Yet another Konami exclusive that failed to make it out of Japan.



SHIN ONIGASHIMA

DEVELOPER: MITSUBISHI © YEAR: 1997

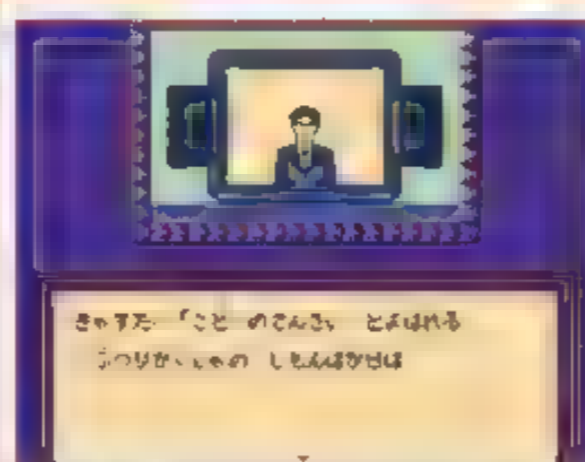
Like *Shin Onigashima*, *Ten no Tawari*, *Rokushū no Katakumori* was released on two disks, the first of which has to be completed before the second one can be used. The game features time travel as a core story concept, with the player going back in time to meet with famous figures such as King of Art, Adolf Hitler, Alexander the Great and even Jesus Christ. Released in July 1991 – eight months after the launch of the Super Famicom – was the first packaged Famicom Disk System title and has since become quite a collector's item.



SŪJISHŌ NO DRAGON

DEVELOPER: SHINJI © YEAR: 1997

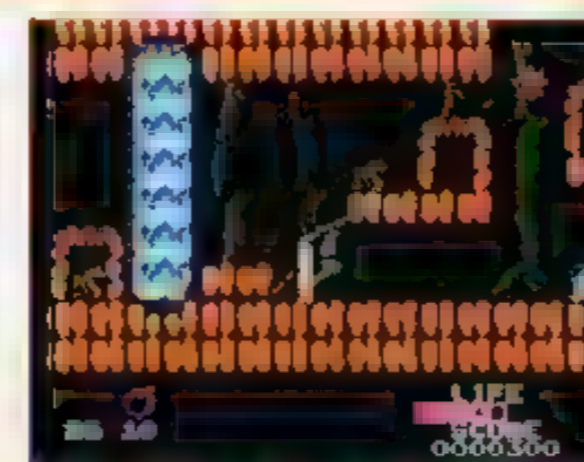
Unique for its time, the adventure title boasts an icon-driven interface and a point-and-click-style cursor which can be moved using the stylus to examine objects of interest. An indie-style curiosity from Japanese studio Nippon Swensen help bring the game to life, and the wacky script setting was ahead of its time. A 1986 RPG release, interestingly Square released *Sūjishō no Dragon* (roughly translated as *The Quartz Dragon*) under its DQG (Disk Original Group) label, which was established especially to create Famicom Disk System titles – a sign of us making publishers and developers neglected the format, to be what was released.



TIME TWIST REKISHI NO KATAKUMORI

DEVELOPER: MITSUBISHI © YEAR: 1997

Like *Shin Onigashima*, *Ten no Tawari*, *Rokushū no Katakumori* was released on two disks, the first of which has to be completed before the second one can be used. The game features time travel as a core story concept, with the player going back in time to meet with famous figures such as King of Art, Adolf Hitler, Alexander the Great and even Jesus Christ. Released in July 1991 – eight months after the launch of the Super Famicom – was the first packaged Famicom Disk System title and has since become quite a collector's item.



ARMANA NO KISEKI

DEVELOPER: KONAMI © YEAR: 1997

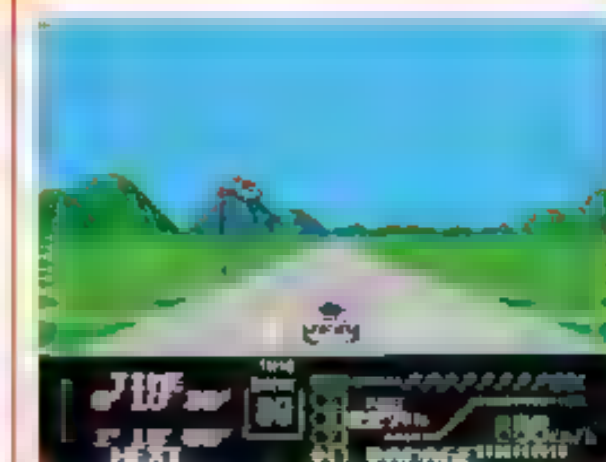
Clearly inspired by the famous Indiana Jones films, *Armana no Kiseki* – also known as *Miracle Of Armana* – is an action platformer that sees the main character exploring underground caverns in search of treasure. The game's grappling hook mechanic borrows heavily from an earlier Konami release called *Rud. In Rope*, which launched in arcades in 1983. The impressive visuals, tight gameplay and dramatic music (composed by Kenji Yamashita) combine to make this one of the Famicom Disk System's more enjoyable action titles – it's a real shame it never made its way over to the standard Famicom and NES as a sub-licence release.



EGGERLAND SŌZŌHE NO TABDACHI

DEVELOPER: PAL LABORATORY © YEAR: 1997

Part of the same series which includes the NFS classic *Adventures Of Lord Eggerland*, *Sōzōhe no Tabdachi* (Eggerland *Departure To Creation*) is a puzzle title set across 50 maps, many of which are recycled from the 1985 MSX product *Eggerland Mystery*. A construction mode allows you to create your own maps, and the level of customization adds greatly to the game's longevity. A Game Boy entry appeared in 1994, but since 1996 instalments in the Eggerland series have remained exclusive to computers in Japan, with the last release – *Rebirth Eggerland* – seeing the light of day in 2007.



FAMICOM GRAND PRIX II 3D MOT RALLY

DEVELOPER: KONAMI © YEAR: 1997

The sequel to *Famicom Grand Prix: F1 Race*, this title substitutes Formula One cars for driving rally vehicles. Manual and digitized steering roles, and the game is notable for making use of the Famicom 3D glasses to create an immersive 3D effect while racing. Like its predecessor, *Famicom Grand Prix II* came with support for the Disk Pak, which allowed high scores to be posted directly to Nintendo – a primitive form of the online leaderboards we enjoy in modern games. Because of this, it came on a blue disk – the final Famicom Disk System title to do so.



YOUR VIDEOGAME ICONS

Curators Darran Jones and Damien McFerran walk you through a museum of some of gaming's greatest icons, as chosen by you



From the surreal adventures of Mier Vally to the rationally explicit Mario, it would appear that everyone loves a good videogame hero. Some characters are made almost by accident, while others are carefully planned to propagate against evil. Most of the videogame heroes like Lara Croft helped define the perception of females in videogames. While the creation of cut-throat FPS heroes stemmed from a simple love of crates. No matter the origins, every single character over the following pages has become revered, respected, with videogames and in the case of a select few, have outgrown the medium they were first created as one of the icons in their own right. Mario, Pac-Man, Sonic, Lara Croft and even Master Chief have become superb examples of this and their legs span everything from T-shirts to lunch boxes. Although Mario, Lara Croft and Master Chief you'll see we were more interested in grouping classic characters together like you might find in an actual museum. Join us then, as we reveal your personal avatars from the last 30+ years of gaming.



SONIC THE HEDGEHOG

■ FIRST APPEARANCE: BAD MOBILE ■ YEAR: 1991

It's rather fitting to start off with one of the most recognisable videogame characters of a time - our museum of the stars. Regardless of whether you see his sewer outings are up to the same standards as his Mega Drive glory years, there's no denying the sheer impact that Sonic has had over the last two decades. Initially every aspect of Sonic's creation was designed with one goal in mind: to become a Mario. As a result, he went through numerous design changes, including a long and arduous armadillo, before Sega eventually settled on his iconic blue hedgehog that is now as unmistakable as Sega's own logo. Unlike Mario, Sonic was edgy. He was cool, he was wild and a world away from Nintendo's friendly, plump and gamery over-the-top. When you think of Sonic, you think of speed, a spunky attitude and those glory days of you were in your Sega when

several staggering successes allowed Sega to claw back the console market share that Nintendo had dominated for so long. Sonic soon outgrew the Mega Drive, moving onto games, cartridges and replacing Sega's old Sega Genesis. A position he still holds today. You see Sonic long before you see Sega's old office and his popular arms crossed pose is a constant reminder of the inner confidence that never rubbed off in the many other videogames that Sonic has been added with in his 20+ years. He admittedly is some of his charm, once he finally found his voice - something that many videogame characters have been guilty of and he was clearly a friend of the younger generation even, but the natural look of Sega's mascot and not get excited how other characters say videogames as well as Sonic. Not bad for a character who started off as M. Needlehead.

Newer heroes

As gaming grew up, so too did its protagonists, gaining the power of speech and plenty of other cool tricks that set them apart from earlier icons

LARA CROFT

■ FIRST APPEARANCE: TOMB RAIDER ■ YEAR: 1996

Lara Croft is the most important female game character of all time. Unlike any other, she could do it: games girls could do, just as well, but much more stylish. Indiana Jones with goggles, Lara instantly stood apart from other characters of the time thanks to her androgynous looks, British English accent, and the fact she starred in a genuine groundbreaking videogame. While the original incarnation of Lara wasn't as well fleshed out as Rhiana's 2013 version, there were enough insights into her backstory to make her far more dynamic than many of her peers, inspired by Hollywood movie stars like Celine Dion and the pop star Cheryl Cole. Lara's creator, Eidos, created her to be a counterpoint to all the easily dismissed female characters that were prevalent at the time. She performed the same job, power, which has powered the franchise to global success, being a heroine that was just at home exploring ancient civilisations as she was in Croft Manor and she eventually became deeper than the games she starred in. Movies were made, countless sequels were delivered — first by Core Design and later by Crystal Dynamics — models were used to portray her in real life and she even made the cover of non-gaming magazines like *Time* magazine. She just iterates away in the future, when the emphasis was more on her adult size than her adventures, but Rhiana's return got her back on track with her vintage Tomb Raider robot.



RYU

■ FIRST APPEARANCE: STREET FIGHTER ■ YEAR: 1987

A wandering fighter who desires nothing more than to be the master of his craft, Ryu's determined stare is almost as iconic as his white karate gi and red gloves. Since his debut in 1987's Street Fighter, Ryu has been an ever-present face in the series, right up to the present day. His Hadouken (robotic) and the Shoryuken (super) are recognisable — not to mention copied — special moves in the one-on-one fighting genre, and his Shoryuken (Dragon Punch) is deadly when used at the right time. Friend and rival Ken Masters shares the same moves and basic sprite design, and is almost as famous.



SOLID SNAKE

■ FIRST APPEARANCE: METAL GEAR ■ YEAR: 1997

A master of tactical espionage and blessed with one of the gruffest voices in videogames, Snake made his debut in the 1987 MSX2 title Metal Gear but would find global fame in the 1998 PlayStation title Metal Gear Solid. Since then, Snake's adventures have sold over 30 million copies, making him one of videogaming's most bankable stars. He's even begged himself a cameo in Nintendo's famous Smash Bros series alongside Sonic. Metal Gear Solid's Phantom Pain will take Snake well beyond the next generation, and will no doubt inspire why he's become such an iconic creation. Not bad for a character that's blatantly modeled on Kum Russell's turn as Snake Plissken in *Escape From New York*.

GUYBRUSH THRETFWOOD

■ FIRST APPEARANCE: THE SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND ■ YEAR: 1990

Guybrush is one of gaming's first main characters. Whether he's swinging his trusty sword, lighting up a pipe or eating a banana, he's got a certain charm. He's also got a certain wit, and a certain wit.

GORDON FREEMAN

■ FIRST APPEARANCE: HALF-LIFE ■ YEAR: 1998

When Valve unleashed Gordon Freeman upon the world, it was a game-changer. He's got a certain charm, and a certain wit. He's also got a certain wit, and a certain wit.

ULALA

■ FIRST APPEARANCE: SPACE CHANNEL 5 ■ YEAR: 1997

Gaga's cute Space Channel 5 character was a game-changer. She's got a certain charm, and a certain wit. She's also got a certain wit, and a certain wit.

DOOMGUY

■ FIRST APPEARANCE: DOOM ■ YEAR: 1993

Thanks to Doom's first party, Doomguy is one of the most iconic characters in gaming. He's got a certain charm, and a certain wit. He's also got a certain wit, and a certain wit.

DUKE NUKEM

■ FIRST APPEARANCE: DUKEN ■ YEAR: 1991

The Duke is one of the most iconic characters in gaming. He's got a certain charm, and a certain wit. He's also got a certain wit, and a certain wit.

CLOUD STRIFE

■ FIRST APPEARANCE: FINAL FANTASY VII ■ YEAR: 1997

We were rather surprised at the inclusion of Cloud Strife in your final selection as he's a hard character to love. Unlike many featured here, he's something of a moody, sad, full-on-ditched teenage angst. He's got a certain charm, and a certain wit. He's also got a certain wit, and a certain wit.



MASTER CHIEF

■ FIRST APPEARANCE: HALO: COMBAT EVOLVED ■ YEAR: 2001

It's hardly surprising that such a new character powered his way into your hearts. For the last 12 years, Master Chief has been as representative of videogames as Mario, Sonic, or Pac-Man. Iconic, thanks to his timeless armour and that helmet. Master Chief — or Petty Officer Johnson — as he's known in his off-duty hours — may be a man of few words, but he doesn't need them. Master Chief's iconic look in Halo and Gordon Freeman before him is a man of action, but he continues to expand his vocabulary with each new adventure.

The Nintendo difference

Nintendo's characters were voted for so often by you that it only seemed right to give them their very own gallery

DONKEY KONG

■ FIRST APPEARANCE: DONKEY KONG ■ YEAR: 1981

Shigeru Miyamoto's first smash-hit video game for Nintendo, Donkey Kong, marked the first appearance of both the titular ape and Mario himself – making it one of the most significant games in the history of the Japanese company. Shown as a puny and spindly mascot in the original title, Donkey Kong would later rise to heroic stardom as part of the Donkey Kong Country series, which started on the SNES and has since moved onto the Wii, Wii U and 3DS.



SAMUS ARAN

■ FIRST APPEARANCE: METROID ■ YEAR: 1986

Few videogame twists can match that moment at the end of Metroid when you realise that the beefy space marine you've been controlling is in fact a woman. In a brilliant little wonder then, that bounty hunter Samus Aran has become one of Nintendo's most celebrated – not to mention controversial – characters. Super Metroid cemented Aran's status as a superstar, while the Metroid Prime trilogy took her to new levels of fame. 2010's Metroid: Other M mixed opinion, however, giving Samus a voice for the first time as well as a slightly annoying characterisation.



LINK

■ FIRST APPEARANCE: THE LEGEND OF ZELDA ■ YEAR: 1986

Like so many of Nintendo's most famous characters, Link began life as a blob of pixels in a visually primitive 8-bit world, but has since grown to become one of the company's most deep and complex talents. His dodgy appearance in the early N64 titles has since given way to a mature and edgy design, but recent outings such as The Wind Waker and Phantom Hourglass have allowed Link to return to his endearing roots. Held in higher regard by many Nintendo fans than even Mario, Link is a true videogaming legend.



MARIO

■ FIRST APPEARANCE: DONKEY KONG ■ YEAR: 1981

It was almost a foregone conclusion that Mario would be your first Nintendo plump plumber, uniquely one of the most iconic, fastest popular culture icons in videogames. Since Nintendo's second power in the 1980s, Mario has undoubtedly become one of the best-loved and most interactive entertainments ever created, and has even been gifted with a Hollywood outing, although the less said about that, the better.

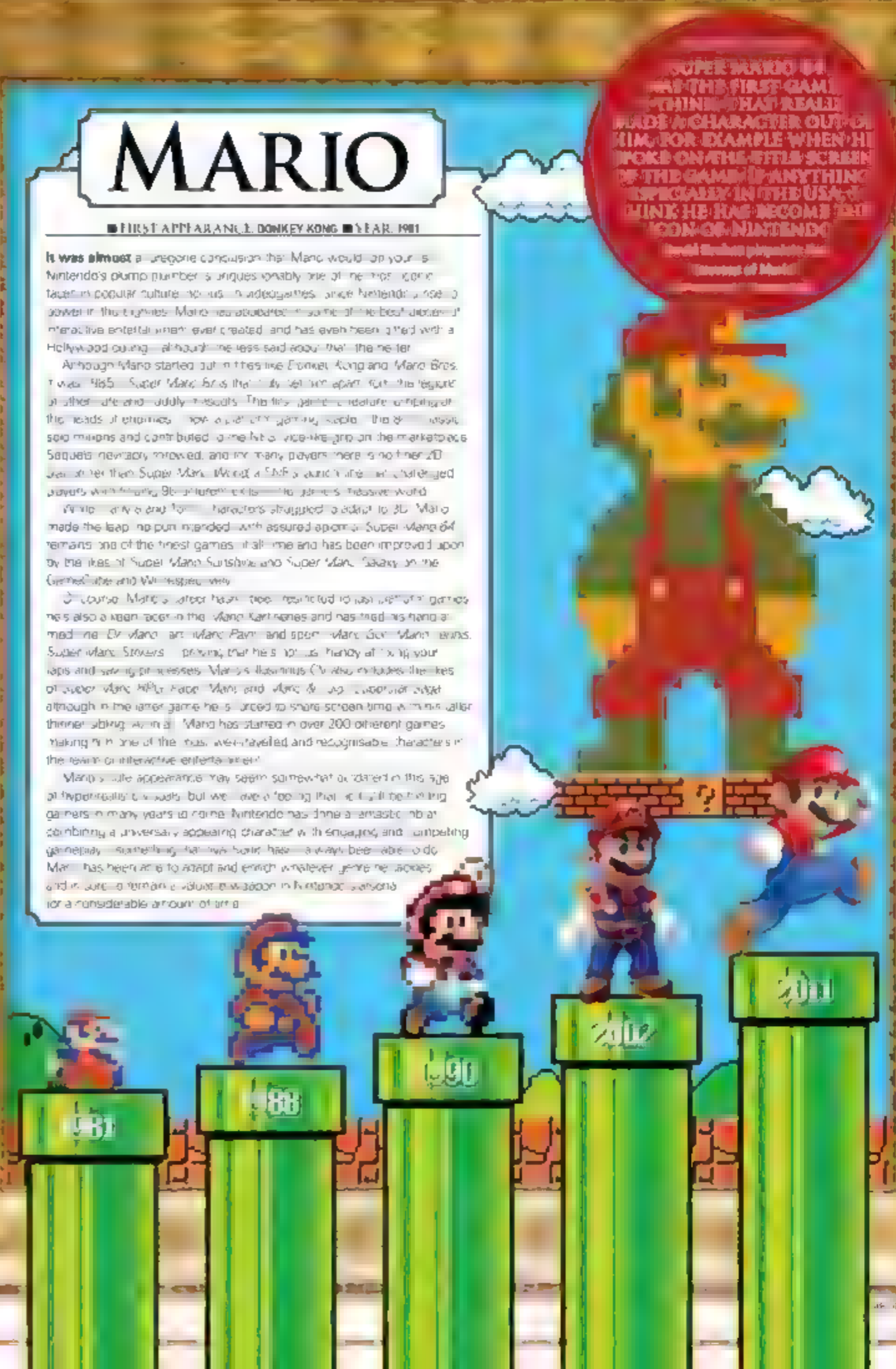
Although Mario started out in the like Donkey Kong and Mario Bros, it was 1985's Super Mario Bros that truly set him apart. For the regular of other late and dodgy mascots, the first game's mature simplicity of the leads of enemies, top-a-platform-gaming, simple but effective, so many and contributed to the hit's wide appeal on the marketplace. Sequels inevitably followed, and for many players there is no finer 2D platformer than Super Mario World, a SNES classic that introduced players with a new, 3D platformer to the games' massive world. While only a step forward, characters struggled to adapt to 3D. Mario made the leap, no pun intended, with assured aplomb. Super Mario 64 remains one of the finest games of all time and has been improved upon by the likes of Super Mario Sunshine and Super Mario Galaxy in the GameCube and Wii respectively.

Of course, Mario's career hasn't been restricted to just platform games; he's also a keen racer in the Mario Kart series and has led his hand at mad science in Mario Galaxy, an anime, a film, and sports. Mario Golf, Mario Tennis, Super Mario Strikers – proving that he's not just handy at fixing your taps and saving princesses. Mario's illustrious CV also includes the likes of Super Mario RPG, Paper Mario and Mario & Luigi Superstar Saga, although in the latter game he is forced to share screen time with his taller thinner sibling, Luigi. Mario has starred in over 200 different games, making him one of the most well-travelled and recognisable characters in the realm of interactive entertainment.

Mario's cute appearance may seem somewhat out of date in this age of hyper-realistic worlds, but we love a toppling that will be making gamers in many years to come. Nintendo has done a fantastic job at combining a universally appealing character with engaging and compelling gameplay – something that, we think, has always been able to do. Mario has been able to adapt and enrich whatever genre he touches, and in doing so remains a vibrant mascot in Nintendo's arsenal for a considerable amount of time.

“SUPER MARIO 64 WAS THE FIRST GAME I THINK I'VE REALLY MADE A CHARACTER OUT OF HIM. FOR EXAMPLE WHEN HE SPOKE ON THE TITLE SCREEN OF THE GAME, IF ANYTHING, ESPECIALLY IN THE USA, I THINK HE HAS BECOME THE BOON OF NINTENDO.”

David Braben, developer of the original Mario



SCORE
00115

TIME
0974

HIGH
00500

250

00

a

scroll

02



The Apprentice



• Amstrad CPC 484
• Mastertronic
• 1986

Mastertronic's *The Apprentice* taught me a

very important life lesson: never judge a videogame by its cover

I received my Amstrad CPC for my 14th birthday, and while I was gutted that I'd been saddled with a green screen, not to look back in the fact that a mistake at Bambi's new shop had double the amount of Amstrad games than I could have.

Of course, being a typical teenager, the games I had, and there were a lot, ranging from classics like *Roland and The Roses* and *Dr. Mummy* to duds like *Bridge-It*. I was not adequate and I simply had to buy a new game. Any game. I didn't matter what I had to

spend and I bought my money as quickly as possible.

Arriving in Poole town centre, I began to look at the rows and rows of cassette tapes and magazines for *The Apprentice*. It immediately caught my eye thanks to its *Exquisite* cover, while the price on the back suggested the brilliance of *Sorcery*.

Sadly, a suggestion of *Sorcery* was all it was. Everything about *The Apprentice* was awful. From the slow-as-molasses movement and your main character to its impossibly designed rooms. Monsters would instantly kill you if you entered a screen at the wrong point, while the inventory system, you could only carry one item at a time and, unlike *Sorcery*, didn't make you want to try. I was not. I had to wait until my second purchase and I never got sucked in by a cover ever again. ★

RETROREVIEWAL

"SEE YOU ON THE BEACH"

From the million-selling Beach Head to pioneering games like Leaderboard, Links and the Tex Murphy series, Access Software was always ahead of the curve with its product line. Mike Bevan looks back on the legacy of Bruce Carver's celebrated company

Steve Witzel recounts, "I actually sold Bruce Carver his first Commodore 64." This, we infer, was possibly the same machine used to create Beach Head, the game that first brought the Access Software brand fame and commercial success.

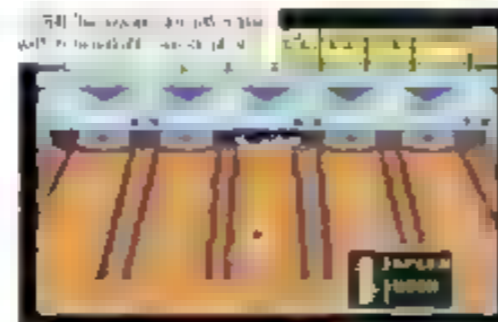
I owned a retail computer store Computers Plus in Midvale, a suburb of Salt Lake City. Steve explains. Around people with 64s were just hungry for information. People wanted to know everything about the inside of the machine and Commodore wasn't very forthcoming. Bruce was an engineer with a local firm called Reed Engineering, doing large construction projects and he bought the 64 and really got interested in learning to program.

With his background in electrical engineering, Steve's knowledgeable demeanour meant that 64 owners were often coming into the store to gain technical information and swap programming tips for the machine. Bruce wrote a little something, a program and brought it in and I gave him a few ideas and said, "If you made a few adjustments, you know we would sell this product in the store," he recalls. "And he was quite surprised and went back and made

those changes, and when we started selling the program, he got very excited.

It was, as they say, the beginning of a beautiful friendship. Bruce's program, Spirmaster, sold well enough to convince us there might be something in this home computer programming lark, specifically on the C64. "The Access Software brand was born with Spirmaster," says Steve. Bruce kept doing his day job and started on his evenings to do star-inspired 3D shooter called Neutral Zone. He came back and said, "you know, really don't know how to sell, so we started a consulting relationship. I was helping him set up distribution networks, and then when the program started to sell, he came back and said, 'I'm having trouble copying the tapes, our audio-cup cables just aren't working well enough.' We finally figured out the big-time when I designed a little device that allowed him to copy six cartridges at once. We started getting quite a large distribution network and he decided to quit his day job, and the owners of Reed actually invested money in Access."

Co-founder of Access Chris Jones remembers. "In the early days we worked out of Bruce's basement. While employed as an accountant at Reed Engineering, Chris partnered with Bruce in order to handle the business side of the company. "We were duplicating the games for distribution, designing ads or advertising, and everything. I was a full-time basement operation. When Bruce developed Neutral Zone, it sold reasonably well which gave us some credibility, room and we could bring others aboard to help with sales.



INSTANT EXPERT

Access Software was founded by engineer Bruce Carver and business partner Chris Jones in Salt Lake City, Utah. The company was incorporated in November 1981 on a start-up budget of \$50,000.

The name Access was chosen after Bruce and his friends scoured through a dictionary looking for the perfect title for the business. Alternative names that were considered were Action Software and Center Soft.

The company is best known for C64 titles like Beach Head, Red Over Moscow and Leaderboard, the PC golf franchise Links and the critically-acclaimed Tex Murphy detective noir adventure series, of which five games were released.

In the UK, Access Software products were distributed by US Gold starting with Beach Head. The UK-based distributor struck a deal with Ocean Software, which converted games like Beach Head and Red Over Moscow to the Spectrum and Amstrad CPC for the European market.

The speech in the C64 version of Beach Head was the voice of Doug Vandergriff, the actor who designed most of Access Software's packaging and was Art Director for the first two Tex Murphy games.

Although simplistic, Neutral Zone demonstrated a key aspect of Bruce's developing skill as a game designer - attention to detail and the integration of realistic physics - something that had been engrained in him through his time as an engineer. Players fired projectiles that flew in a parabolic trajectory or enemy tanks, a feature that would re-emerge in the most famous section of Beach Head along with Neutral Zone's filter-heavy explosion effects, born from his experiments with the C64's SID chip.

"We had talked about a game centred on a World War II concept, which eventually became Beach Head," recalls Chris. "That game was inspired by war-time movies on the map. It also gave us an opportunity to get in with chain stores and major distributors."

Beach Head also marked the start of a profitable relationship with the UK-based distributor US Gold, the company that would market many of Access Software's future products in Europe.

"I had this picture in my mind of the player shooting down enemy aircraft from a ship," Bruce stated in a 1987 interview with Commodore Magazine. "Once I had thought out the anti-aircraft idea, everything else revolved around that central theme. [Chris and I] were both old war movie fans and Beach Head was the perfect outlet for our imaginations. It allowed us to take our favourite film scenes, translate them to graphics and actually participate in the action."

Beach Head C64 was the game that started it all for me personally, says US Gold's founder, local brewer. "I couldn't believe how fantastic it looked with smooth animation and very realistic graphics. The game play was like nothing I had ever seen. The UK streets ahead of the competing UK product seem to remember guaranteeing to sell 100,000 units - eventually sold over

"US Gold believed that any publicity was good publicity"

CHRIS JONES



Beach Head was the first game to be distributed by US Gold.

a million. Bruce Carver shook my hand and the game shook up the UK C64 market. A few days later I took the UK games show where the whole thing was just a portable game with a C64 running the game. All the guys of Amiga Software coming to look at the game and telling me later that he went back to his guys and told them to scrap everything they were working on. The party has been raised.

With Beach Head, Bruce seemed to have hit on a sure-fire design formula, linking a collection of diverse game sequences with a military-inspired storyline, dressed with what were for their time, cutting-edge graphics. And despite receiving some input from Chris and Steve, Bruce, a renowned perfectionist, worked out all the coding and graphics on his early C64 games by himself.

REMEMBERING BRUCE CARVER

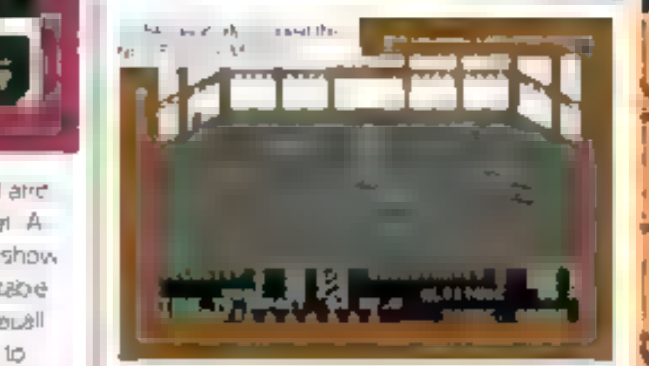
"Bruce was a multi-talented," says his brother Roger. "He was great at programming, but he was always involved with design. In the end, he did it. He was the first to program. He was a great manager of people and a great designer. [I was] a multi-talented, but he was everything we need. He could really do anything."

"Bruce was a great family man, had a wonderful sense of humour and was a laugh-comedian in any game that he played," adds Chris Jones. "In terms of the business, he was incredibly smart and multi-talented and could do all the job, and could program for the games."

"I was always amazed at how the images on the screen felt so three-dimensional in the environments that we were restricted to because of the limited computing power. His unique talent of engineering credits are allowed.

"I can't think of any other person that could work anyone under the table. He was truly one of a kind."

More controversial to actual players was the opening of the game, where you had to wrestle the aerial control controls of your ship while expressing a funk from behind the hangar doors of the launch bay. "In my mind they made a few things too hard."



The only artist we had on staff was Doug Vandergriff, says Steve. He was part-time artist and still worked at Reed and did all the covers for the Access games up until the last five or six years. He was actually an Emmy award-winning artist."

Access's next game reprised this successful multi-game approach, moving from the D-Day-inspired setting of Beach Head to a rather more controversial Cold War-themed action game. With a ludicrous plot in part with the John Milius movie Red Dawn, Red Over Moscow saw you sinking back at the Russian capital in a nuclear fight, not in order to prevent nuclear bombardment from those pesky Soviets. It's easy to look back on the game as a bit of harmless fun but it's worth remembering the shadowing the shooting down of an unarmed foreign airplane by a Russian jet, and the country's invasion of Afghanistan. US-Soviet relations were extremely sensitive to say the least.

US Gold believed that any publicity was good publicity, says Chris. They figured they could get the product noticed on the map by protesting in front of the Russian Embassy in London. This was during the Reagan years so there was high tension between the US and Russia. However, the controversy did get US notices and helped prop up sales. And since it didn't quite work out, the game was another hit for Access, despite the negative reaction, especially in Finland, where panicked ministers debated in parliament about Germany where Access was forced to rename it simply Red.

More controversial to actual players was the opening of the game, where you had to wrestle the aerial control controls of your ship while expressing a funk from behind the hangar doors of the launch bay. "In my mind they made a few things too hard."



TIMELINE

- 2004** BRUCE CARVER CREATES SPHERICAL STEER AND BEGINS SETTING UP IN STEVE WIZEL'S COMPUTER STORE. ACCESS SOFTWARE FORMS IN NOVEMBER THAT YEAR.
- 1983** ACCESS FIRST GAME RELEASED: BEACH HEAD WHICH PROVIDES A PHANTOMIA OF THE US GOLD AGE OF THE WESTERN FILM AND PAYS OFF LANCE.
- 1984** BRUCE CARVER ATTEMPTS TO REACH THE SIERRA LEADERBOARD WITH THE LEADERBOARD LEADER INSTEAD PAID OVER MISCELLANEOUS PUBLISHING GAMES. THE YEAR AFTER BRUCE CARVER AND ROGER CARVER JOIN THE COMPANY.
- 1987** BEACH HEAD IS THE DICTIONARY OF THE WESTERN FILM. ACTING AND DIRECTOR. REVIEW IN THE GAMING PRESS.
- 1988** BRUCE CARVER DESIGNS THE TEMPTING BOWLING SIMULATION WITH FRAME PRICES TO THE RELEASE OF THE WESTERN ACTION GAME. FRAMERBOARD LATER THAT YEAR.
- 1987** EDGE OF DARK WORLD CLASS AND FRAMERBOARD RELEASED AND BUILT GAMES ARE PORTED TO THE PC.
- 1987** TEX MURPHY MAKES HIS FIRST APPEARANCE IN MEAN STREETS.
- 1989** ACCESS PUBLISHES ITS FIRST YEAR ONLY TITLE LINKS, THE FINAL PART OF GOLF.
- 1994** THE FIRST CD-ROM BASED TEX MURPHY ADVENTURE: MICHAEL ENGINEER. THIS IS THE 1995.
- 1998** THE LATEST MURPHY GAME OVERSEER IS RELEASED ON DVD-ROM.
- 1999** MICROSOFT BUYS ACCESS SOFTWARE AND IT IS INTEGRATED INTO THE MICROSOFT GAME STUDIO. THE YEAR AFTER SAULT LAKE GAMES IS BORN.
- 2003** MICROSOFT RENAMES THE STUDIO INDIE GAMES.
- 2004** TAKE TWO INTRINSICALLY PURCHASES THE STUDIO FROM MICROSOFT AND IT IS RENAMED INDIE BUILT.
- 2004** TAKE TWO SHUTS DOWN INDIE BUILT BRIZZING OFF OVER 20 YEARS OF PIONEERING GAME DEVELOPMENT. A CLOSE.

“In the early days, we worked out of Bruce’s basement”

CHRIS JONES

► Access's first C64 title *Mean Streets* was another ambitious offering that jumped to the PC platform, using a modified version of the *Echelon* 3D engine and featuring striking digitised graphics and speech courtesy of RealSound. It introduced an original new hero named Tex Murphy. We felt *Echelon* had done reasonably well for us as a product and we were looking for a way to expand the usage, explains Chris. “The idea we kicked around was having a purpose to the fights in. For example, we wanted the player to fly anywhere on the West Coast. This evolved into having a detective storyline behind it and that’s how Tex Murphy came to be. While we started out trying to do a light-sim, by the time the product went out it was more of an adventure.”

Mean Streets was when Chris really took on a more creative role, says Brent. “I was right in line with his interests as a kid. He and Doug used to make movies as young kids and sustain them for their family. In fact we made a movie of *Access: April 19th from Outer Space* that had most of us taking on various acting roles.”

“We did a huge launch at the Academy Awards of Arts and Sciences building in Beverly Hills,” remembers Steve. “We had a lot of Hollywood celebrities show up for that because we were bringing it as an interactive movie and they were all interested...where this computer thing was going. The fact that *Mean Streets* cast of characters were digitised from real actors indeed gave it an impressive cinematic flavour, while Chris himself stepped into

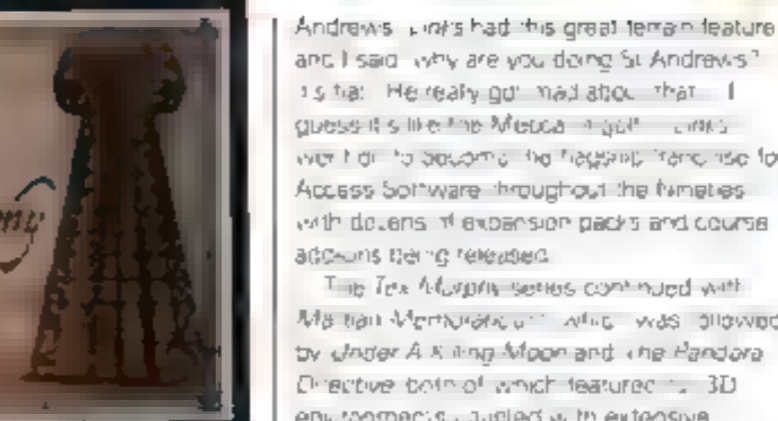
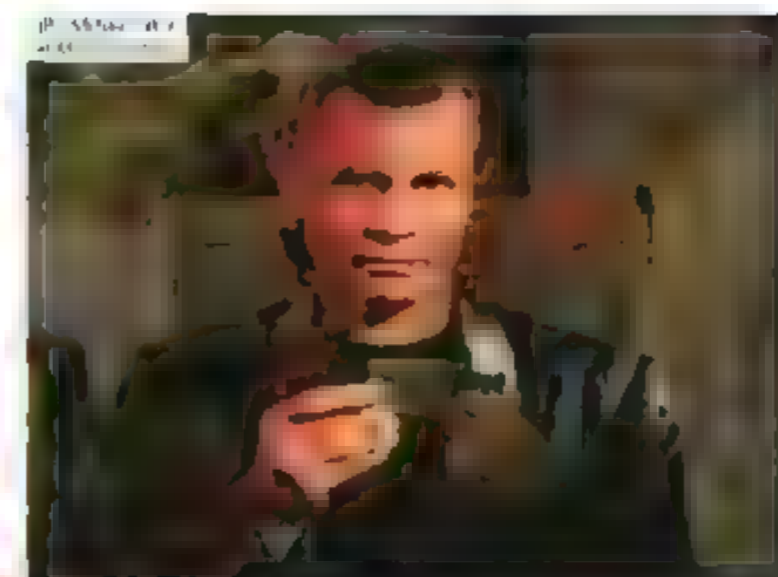


Chris Jones in the basement of his home in Los Angeles.

the role of Tex, one that he would reprise a further four times. **W**ith years of experience working on the *Leaderboard* games, Access was about to take another brave step into the PC software market. Bruce and I had a lot of conversations about *Leaderboard* game out,” says Steve. “The C64 sales were sinking...everyone was moving to the PC but Bruce was ‘tagging his fee’ because it was 16 colours at the time. We had a long talk after a CES and I said ‘Bruce, we need to come up with the first VGA-only game and we need to do it as VGA-only.’ That game was *Links*. The challenge of *Golf*, the series debut, or what would become the best-selling PC golf franchise ever. At the time most PC games also supported the original VGA mode, leading to a compromise in visual quality being allowed exclusively to the higher-end VGA graphics cards. *Links* was considerably better-looking than any other golf game on the market. “We sold a lot of copies to people that wanted to show off their computers because it was just gorgeous,” says Steve. “Bruce’s goal was to get the terrain within two inches of what it was in the real world. I did get in trouble with him with one of the versions which had \$1



Chris Jones in the basement of his home in Los Angeles.



TESLA EFFECT: CHRIS JONES Q&A

Why did you decide that the time was right to revive Tex Murphy?
We had tried reviving Tex Murphy several times since the cliffhanger in *Overseer* in 1998. However, during that time adventure games had fallen out of favour for games that were more ‘casual-friendly’. Aaron Carnes and I had approached several publishers since that time to bring Tex back, but no one was interested. When Double Fine had its great success with crowdfunding their adventure through *Kickstarter*, we knew we had to try this method to revive Tex. We have a hardcore following of Tex fans who have stuck with us over the years, and they were the ones who made the *Kickstarter* campaign a success. We are very thankful to them for helping us achieve our dream of bringing Tex back.

Were you surprised at the reaction from fans over the Kickstarter project?
Finally, we were gratified. It had been a long time since the last game and we weren’t sure what sort of reaction our *Kickstarter* campaign would receive. By the time *Overseer* was out, not only had the popularity of adventure games diminished, but games that used PCV also suffered greatly in the mainstream gaming world. To have people excited for Tex to come back was a complete thrill for us.

What can we expect from the new game?
You’re going to see very good performances by accomplished acting talent, a rich story on an epic scale and three different paths of experiences taking you through the game. It’s not merely a matter of three different endings, but three different experiences that the player develops throughout the game. Rob Crow’s story is funny, scary, compelling and, because a player gets varied information on each path, the game offers hours of re-playability.

drop platforms like the Mac... so we said we’d differentiate between our game, *Links*, and their game, *Microsoft Golf*. “That came to a head one day when USA Today reviewed both games and rated ours higher than Microsoft’s. The games were virtually identical in performance, but our marketing was better which gained us more recognition in the press. Finally they said ‘...we just want to buy the company. And I think it was really the right time for Access because we didn’t have the deep pockets to go after the likes of Tiger Woods and we didn’t have the marketing budget to be on multiple platforms. A lot of people thought that with Microsoft behind us we would really start to sell a lot.”

The buyout was completed in 1999, with Access becoming a satellite of Microsoft Game Studios, but the hope of massive sales gains never materialised. Bruce Carver continued to work on the *Links* series until his death in 2003, to form the consulting company Carver-Homes. In 2004, Microsoft sold the studio to Take-Two Interactive, which retained the company indie-built indie products *Armed & Dangerous* and the *Home* simulator *Top Spin* for the Xbox 360 before finally closing in 2006.

Today, the Access legacy lives on in TrueGolf – where Chris, Roger and other former employees still work – a subsidiary that escaped the Microsoft buyout and designs big-screen golf simulators for home and corporate use. In 2007, Chris Jones and Aaron Carnes formed Big Fish Games and began the process of testing a possible sixth Tex Murphy adventure – with the working title *Project Hedera* – to publishers. On 6 June 2012 a Kickstarter campaign by Big Fish successfully raised funding for the new game, after \$568,104 was pledged by backers, easily surpassing the company’s \$400,000 goal. And so began a whole new adventure for Chris and several other Access alumni. As this issue of *RG* went to press, Big Fish announced that the new game would be called *Tesla Effect*, and appears to be the most advanced aspects of the work of the famous Austrian physicist and inventor Nikola Tesla. It’s been a long time coming, but the *Tesla* will most definitely be back.



SCORE
48,774

2 WAVE

SHIELD GONE

CLASSIC GAMES

Star Wars

PLATFORM: ARCADE DEVELOPER: KATAMARI RELEASED: 1983

I took Atari ten years to recreate the classic Death Star trench run, but by goodness was it worth the wait. Thanks to the success of Return of the Jedi,

which was an worldwide on-mania release, gamers eagerly lapped up the chance to participate in the original film's grand finale. The estimate you made your way through the trench was relatively straightforward, as you only had to deal with gun emplacements and the odd freighter. Things got much trickier in later runs, however, with massive bombers that would force you to back and weave as you desperately spotted holes in your precious shields. Later games may have been more realistic, particularly Star Wars Rogue Squadron II: Rogue Leader on the GameCube, but the original still remains our favourite.

BIO

Atari took Star Wars and everything you wanted from a hit arcade game. It had stunning wire-frame visuals, excellent controls and an amazingly frantic pace. Best of all though, it was based on one of the best science fiction films of all time, effortlessly capturing the thrills and spills of Star Wars's epic space battles. Needless to say, gamers flocked to it, eager to experience the thrilling trench run and get the opportunity to mow down scores of TIE fighters. It remains one of the best games based on the beam. High praise indeed, considering how many Star Wars games there are.

MORE CLASSIC STAR WARS MOMENTS

"That's no moon, it's a space station"

While the Death Star trench run is one of the best moments in Star Wars, blowing up the iconic Death Star comes a close second. While you don't have to worry about being chased by Darth Vader, you do have to take quite a few Star Destroyers down. Miss and you have to face your opponent. Hit, however, and you're called back to the trench in that old-fashioned fashion. Or, by you're a safe distance away, it explodes.



"Don't get cocky!"

One of the best parts of Star Wars is facing off against TIE fighters. The earlier titles are especially enjoyable, while the first waves are simple to shoot down as the game progresses. You'll struggle with it though, as the satisfaction you get from shooting them down is immense. You'll even get a crash at Darth Vader's ship, but unfortunately it can't be destroyed.



"May the force be with you"

Knocking down TIE fighters is a never-ending task, but if you want to be really cool, you might want to take down the actual freighters that are flying at you. Freighters pop up throughout the game and become increasingly prevalent on later trench runs. You'll need amazing reflexes to take them down, and as they increase in number, you'll find your work even more combat. A great way to show off your skills when playing in the arcade.



"Use the force, Luke"

One of the neatest moments from Star Wars is nothing more than a sword-wielding Obi-wan sieging before you approach the speeder. If you're not yourself, in large doses, it's a good snatching down of looks or a yellow-zwinger. Both of which show a useless rebels. This captures not a far amount of time, but the moment of spinning and rotating in to the actual Death Star trench.





With a remake on the way, David Crookes talks to Lorne Lanning about the impact of Abe's Oddysee and the rest of a series that just fell short of its planned quintology

A character who can break wind is always a winner. Even if that character is an alien with bulbous, bloodshot eyes, a high ponytail of hair made from feathers and a skinny, almost malnourished torso; the ability to let one go, while undoubtedly disgusting, is yet all too endearing to ignore.

They may not be a fool employed by many other gaming characters, but genius Sonic Mania and even Lara could give a go. Then again, they have not quite endured the life of Abe, star of the Oddworld games, whose bibliography would make noses twitch from amid the toughest of outbriens.

Abe's days are spent scrubbing floors and suffering heartless beatings from Sigs, the backbone of a repressive society's industrial security team. Things take a rather sinister turn when Abe accidentally discovers that he and his fellow Mudokon workers are not merely slaves, but fodder for the machines used at the vast Rupture Farms food processing plant where they toil each day.

Lucky then that Abe emerges as the chosen one and is able to pursue the ousting of dictator Muck the Gukkon and his over-reign, thereby freeing the downtrodden from their horrific plight.

Today, such determination to stick one to The Man and spark an uprising would undoubtedly involve Twitter – technology-free Abe treks a rather more conventional path stomping around a foot-meeting other slaves in person and cheerily urging them to follow me – but not too closely, you would hope.

From a story perspective, all of the Oddworld games were inspired from the only needs of the dark side of globalisation: explains Lorne Lanning, who co-founded American developer Oddworld Entertainment with fellow special effects and computer animator expert Snerly McKenna. And it was the stories that convinced Snerly to get involved and do this whole thing with me.

Work began on the plot in January 1995. We took big inspiration from the escapade Out Of This World and Myst and worked well – some corridors. We started to create an intriguing world. Ideas were bounced off lightsaber Paul O'Connor and the crew to work out what would work and what could be altered should production hit any issues.

Originally, the idea was to call the game SoulStorm, but other games at the time had the word 'Soul' in them, so a new moniker was found to avoid confusion. There were also initial thoughts over making the game 3D, but this was scrapped in favour of 2D, even though the advent of the 32-bit consoles showed a market going the other way.

The game drew on the gaming styles of old – right down to an 8-bit, tick-screen mad antic – and that was due to Lorne's belief that there was still mileage left in 2D gaming. Some had also been working with 3D for the previous decade and didn't see the crop of 3D games on the PlayStation world outstanding enough to prompt a switch.

Still, the assets were built in 3D. The homepage for the game were pre-rendered and this, in a sense, produced 2.5D with the



LORNE LANNING, CO-FOUNDER OF ODDWORLD ENTERTAINMENT

image depth and detail. "We didn't want to launch a low poly world, to establish the first impression of the Oddworld universe," Lorne says, revealing that his plan to build a five-part story – The Oddworld Chronicles – was foremost in his mind.

As well as beautiful visuals and sick cut-scenes that blended into the gameplay, a major part of Oddworld was the feature Gamespeak, it allowed Abe to talk, whistle and, yes, fart, and it was crucial for gameplay and/or humour. Seldom failing to raise a smile, it was seen as so important that it was included in the demo, one hawked around to publishers to whip up interest and investment in the game.

The debut title also had an artificial intelligence routine called Aware, systems that let the environment respond to Abe's actions. The

combed the actions of the game's creatures according to the situation they were faced with and the type of character they were. Abe could therefore decide to solve some puzzles and ignore others, and the mayor could even trick Sigs into shading each other.

Abe could also charm and possess other characters, using them to solve puzzles or carry out a killing. Although the game wanted snoring in the game handling, Lorne wanted Abe to have a witchy trigger-finger himself, and this was a way around such a situation. Likeer watchers will also note incidentally that Abe had four fingers in the debut game, but only three thereafter – this was to avoid causing confusion in Japan, where four-fingered characters are banned out of respect for meat-packing workers who often lose their fingers in work-related accidents. Abe's

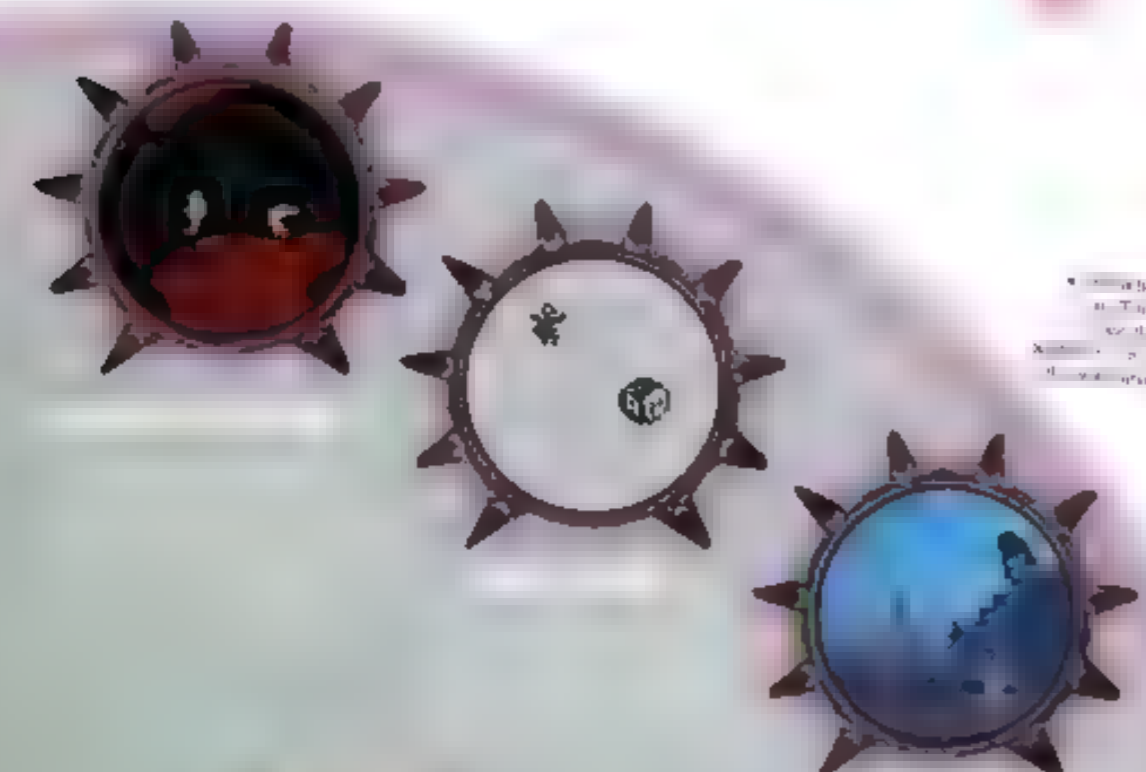
Oddysee progressed well and was earmarked for a PlayStation and PC release. ▶



ABE'S ODDWORLD: THE HISTORY OF



ODD WORLDS



THE LONGEST JOURNEY

Illustration of a Mudokon character.



► *Abe's Oddyssey* was a huge success and it sold well enough to lead up to a crisis as prompting a game boy version called *Oddworld Adventures* to be released in 1998. There was a complaint it was the lack of a quick save feature. I was mad because I had no delivery without getting the first three mases come chalk it up to lessons learned - but the team made sure it was implemented in the sequel.

We had just nine months to release *Abe's Exoduss* for Christmas following *Oddyssey's* release, "it was a super crunch all the way through the entire development and this was less than half the time that *Abe's Oddyssey* took us to develop. But it was more complicated as we also believed we needed twice the game in sheer pourcentage.

The second game in the series which was released in November 1998 picked up where the first game left off. Abe had become a celebrity but was old he the Mudokons a leading class capitalist industrial pace with a disregard for worker rights. was grabbing blind Mudokons and enslaving them to excavate a Mudokon burial site with a poison being created from the bones of the dead. Abe had to find a cure for the illness and prevent the creation of the storm's brew.

The time but the characters became more emotionally engaging and the

pace picked up. Gamespeak instructions were used to communicate. The Mudokons at the same time and Mudokons found it harder to follow Abe because many of them were blind. "It wasn't about giving the game a further level of poison, food and chocolate."

"Our approach to the game was pretty much comparable with how you would approach a film," says Jolley. "With both you start with a script, but we then added a layer of game mechanics that we knew we wanted to implement or evolve upon."

"So starting with these two key high-level components we worked them up simultaneously. We integrated the script tightly against the ramping of mechanics in gameplay. Our target was continually working to try to find a light touch of narrative that was not only engaging as a story but was also intimate and foreshadowing of new play mechanics that would be coming up next for the player."

The first game had a heads-up display, but this was dropped for the sequel. "It was a goal of mine to try to eliminate any menu-oriented that broke the reality of our world," Jolley explains. "Floating Game Elements reinforce to you this is a game and for the original *Abe's* games we wanted to get away from that impression and instead try to instill the sensation of the player being responsible for these people living in this world."

In trying to remove all traces of the traditional heads-up display, *Oddworld* inhabitants attempted to find more clever, subtle methods of communicating necessary information and tried to do it in more logical ways so that it felt more like a film. "We wanted the elements to feel like they were within the world rather than a HUD layered over the world," Jolley continues. "It was attempting to accomplish a deeper impression of a living creature adventure rather than just a gaming adventure."

The emotions helped bring the creatures to life. "The second game had more entertainment value as well as a stronger emotional relationship to the story," Jolley says. "We always want you to laugh when you're playing our games regardless of how dark their subject matter is."

And dark is a good descriptor. Much of that is down to Jolley himself. He is a doom thinker who, with the *Oddworld* series of games, was aiming to craft a gameplay and story experience that drew on a sense of justice resting in the back of one's mind was a concern for disturbing human rights abuses by powerful corporations from the shipping docks of Bangladesh to the diamond and gold mines in South America and South Africa. He wanted *Oddworld* to have a dark premise but

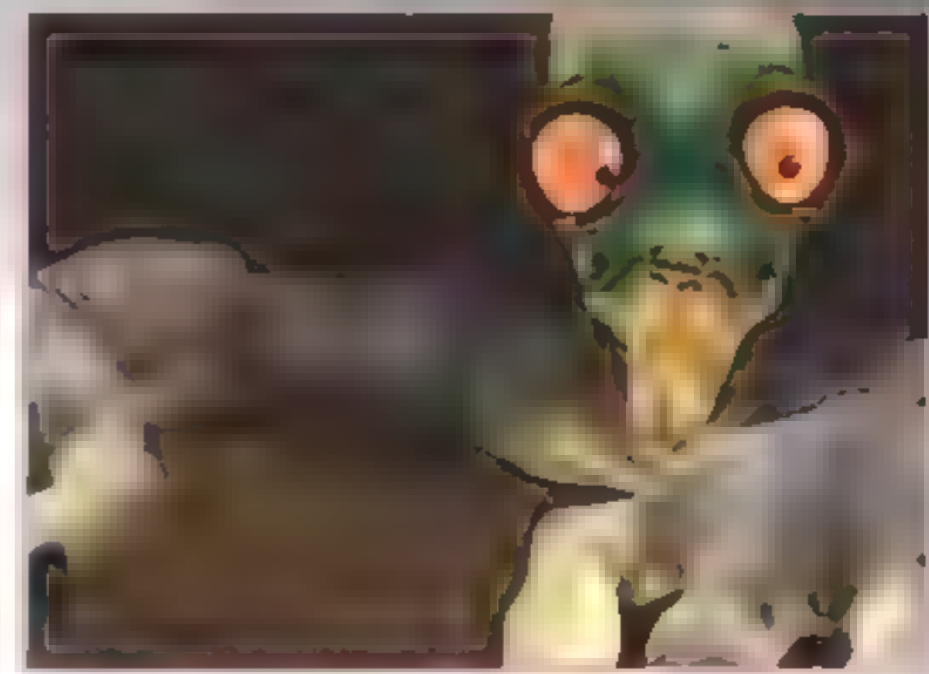


Illustration of a Mudokon character.

follow the lead set by *The Simpsons* and the *Dave Show*, both of which refrain from getting up on a soap box. "He didn't want to lose sight of *Oddworld* as entertainment and beyond that humor and narrative would combine to raise important issues."

"He denies that the series is political. "Personally, Jolley points a finger at the chumps," he says. "It's for suckers who still believe they have people fighting for their interests in the great halls of power and other, wrongly refuse to see that their would-be heroes have been completely compromised." Jolley talks of an insane elite class of gluttons actively running the planet for the rest of us and for their own short-term power gains.

"It was always these practices that inspired the content of *Oddworld*, as these stories started taking shape 20 years ago." Jolley

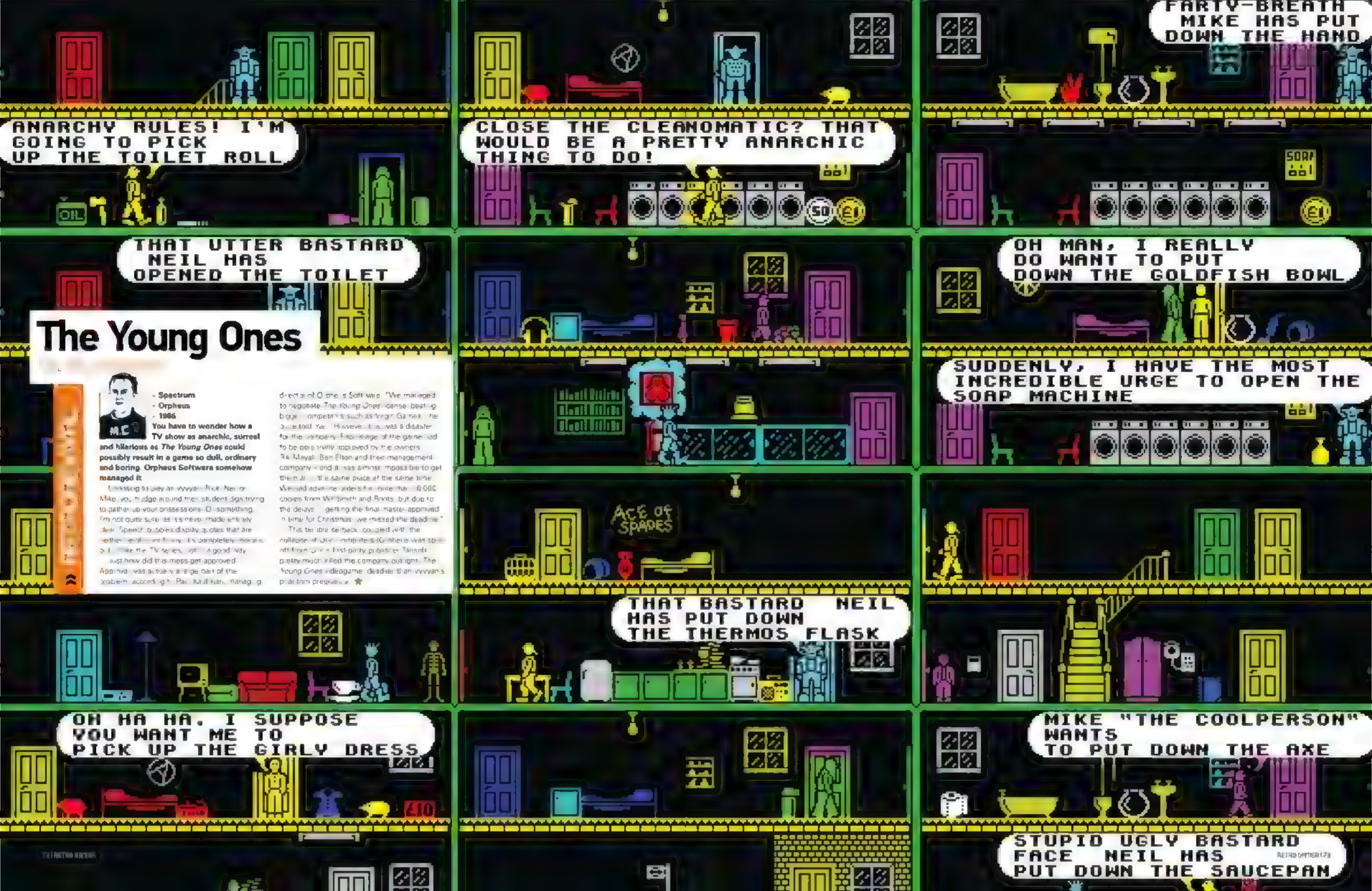


ODD ADVENTURES

Your guide to Abe and co's numerous retail releases

 ABE'S ODDYSSEY DEVELOPER: ODDWORLD PUBLISHER: NEWMARKET PLATFORMS: PLAYSTATION 1, 2 YEAR: 1997	 ABE'S EXODUSS DEVELOPER: ODDWORLD PUBLISHER: NEWMARKET PLATFORMS: PLAYSTATION 1, 2 YEAR: 1998	 ODD WORLD ADVENTURES DEVELOPER: ODDWORLD PUBLISHER: NEWMARKET PLATFORMS: GAME BOY YEAR: 1998	 ODD WORLD ADVENTURES 2 DEVELOPER: ODDWORLD PUBLISHER: NEWMARKET PLATFORMS: GAME BOY YEAR: 1999	 MUNCH'S ODDYSSEY DEVELOPER: ODDWORLD PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT PLATFORMS: PLAYSTATION 1, 2 YEAR: 1999	 MUNCH'S ODDYSSEY DEVELOPER: ODDWORLD PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT PLATFORMS: PLAYSTATION 1, 2 YEAR: 1999	 STRANGER'S WRATH DEVELOPER: ODDWORLD PUBLISHER: NEWMARKET PLATFORMS: PLAYSTATION 1, 2 YEAR: 2000
---	--	---	---	---	---	---





The Young Ones



• Spectrum
 • Orpheus
 • 1986
 You have to wonder how a TV show as anarchic, surreal and hilarious as *The Young Ones* could possibly result in a game so dull, ordinary and boring. Orpheus Software somehow managed it.

Consisting to play as wyyva, Rick, Neil or Mike, you frudge around their student digs trying to gather up your possessions. Or something. I'm not quite sure as it's never made entirely clear. Speech bubbles display quotes that are neither useful nor funny. It's completely unplayable. Like the TV series, it's a good idea just how did this mess get approved. Apparently was actually a huge part of the problem, according to Paul Kaufman, managing

director of Orpheus Software. "We managed to negotiate *The Young Ones* license beating bigger competitors such as Virgin Games," he says. "However, this was a disaster for the company. Feedback of the game had to be positively approved by the owners, Rick Mayall, Ben Elton and their management company, and it was almost impossible to get them all at the same place at the same time. We had advance orders for 100,000 copies from Virgin Smith and Acorn, but due to the delays in getting the final master approved in time for Christmas, we missed the deadline." This terrible setback, coupled with the collapse of Orpheus computers (Orpheus was split off from Orpheus First-party publisher, Tarrant) pretty much killed the company outright. *The Young Ones* videogame, deadlier than wyyva's platform prequel. ★

FUTURE CLASSIC

Modern games you'll still be playing in years to come



INFO
 In *Red Dead Redemption*, you play as John Marston, a former outlaw who has turned over a new leaf and is trying to make a good life for himself and his wife and child. The game is set in a fictionalized version of the American West in the late 19th century. It features a rich, detailed world with a variety of activities, from hunting and fishing to gambling and dancing. The game also includes a complex story with many side quests and a large, open world to explore.

GO DEEPER
Red Dead Redemption is a masterpiece of storytelling and world-building. It's a game that has stood the test of time and is still one of the best Western games ever made. If you're looking for a game that offers a rich, immersive experience, *Red Dead Redemption* is the one to play.



37.

RED DEAD REDEMPTION

Rockstar Games managed to craft the greatest of open worlds, as well a mature and accomplished narrative that reignited the unfashionable Western genre

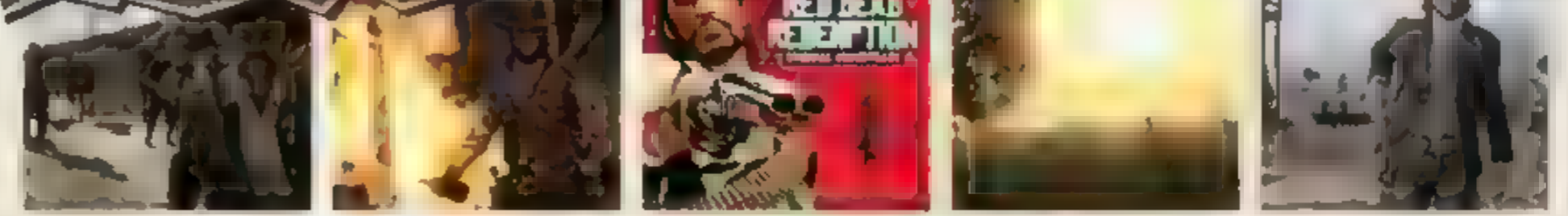
THE BACKGROUND
 The most judicially notable part of *Red Dead Redemption*'s journey to completion is the fact it was announced in a largely different form alongside the PS3's messiest unveiling during E3 2006. It was initially referred to as a sequel to 2004's *Red Dead Revolver*, some aspects of which made it into the far more ambitious sequel, notably the Dead Eye slow-motion combat mechanic.

The goal was to capture the essence of Westerns on a grander, cinematic level, creating an open-world backdrop that could enable every character's experience that a fan of that genre could aspire to. Part pastiche and part expansion of Rockstar's existing sensibilities with creating open worlds – the latter stimulated by the previous year's *GTA IV* – the New York Times claimed that *Red Dead Redemption* cost almost \$100 million to make, an investment that vastly outstripped most of Rockstar's industry contemporaries at the time.

It was a gigantic risk, really, considering that the Western had more or less remained dormant within videogames, and the wider cultural landscape, for many years – the original *Red Dead Revolver* only sold 3 million copies, a small number, of course, but a follow-up of *Red Dead*'s scale had to do a lot better to justify that size of investment. It did. With 13 million copies sold, *Red Dead* asserted Rockstar's dominance of the open-world genre beyond *GTA*.

THE GAME
 A great open world has an effect on the player beyond spectacle and size. To consume hours of your time while you explore with no goal, enjoying the sunsets, creating gameplay moments in your mind, or simply watching the wild life populate deserts, *Red Dead Redemption*'s sandbox was simply years ahead of its competitors. While Rockstar's output is contentious among some as to whether the publisher's games deserve such extraordinary levels

Things of note



Open season Beyond the single-player *Red Dead* is a crown jewel of the GTA franchise. It's a game that's full of life, with a lot of things to do and a lot of things to see. It's a game that's full of life, with a lot of things to do and a lot of things to see.

Man of war, man of peace *Red Dead* was sold as the pursuit of a grand Western fantasy, but it's a game that's full of life, with a lot of things to do and a lot of things to see.

Mexico and José González *Red Dead*'s most talked-about moment comes when Marston enters Mexico, and the assistant transition to the other land with an original track by José González.

Horror comes West One of the people who own *Red Dead* will wonder how they jumped the genre. It's a game that's full of life, with a lot of things to do and a lot of things to see.

Voicing John Marston Rob Mack Jr. put in a stellar performance as John Marston, the character who leads you through the game. It's a game that's full of life, with a lot of things to do and a lot of things to see.



What the press thought

...the game is a masterpiece of storytelling and world-building. It's a game that has stood the test of time and is still one of the best Western games ever made.

...the game is a masterpiece of storytelling and world-building. It's a game that has stood the test of time and is still one of the best Western games ever made.

...the game is a masterpiece of storytelling and world-building. It's a game that has stood the test of time and is still one of the best Western games ever made.

of praise, its ambition with *Red Dead* to create an open world that permits every kind of Wild West fantasy quester beyond what even its own *GTA* series had previously accomplished.

Here, we have a gigantic world with its own ecosystem, random events and RPG influences, death to unravel John Marston's story is technically set on the American/Mexican border, yet it compresses elements of the wider American wilderness into one massive, summary of its most visually diverse areas. Travelling across the world, your knowledge of each region is formed by recognizing landmarks and rock formations – the stretch of land feels vast, yet the interactivity with the impressively constructed world makes *Red Dead* so compelling, however, and ahead of its time within a genre that is so mostly restrained in the way you can affect the surrounding world.

Being able to hunt anything, board every train, start a shootout in saloons, duel with strangers, anger wild creatures

and land any NPC gives you constant incentives to remain in this world, to play with the possibilities available in the story missions. This is balanced by a smart morality system that declares you an outlaw or champion based on your actions – consequences, to bring weight to the choices.

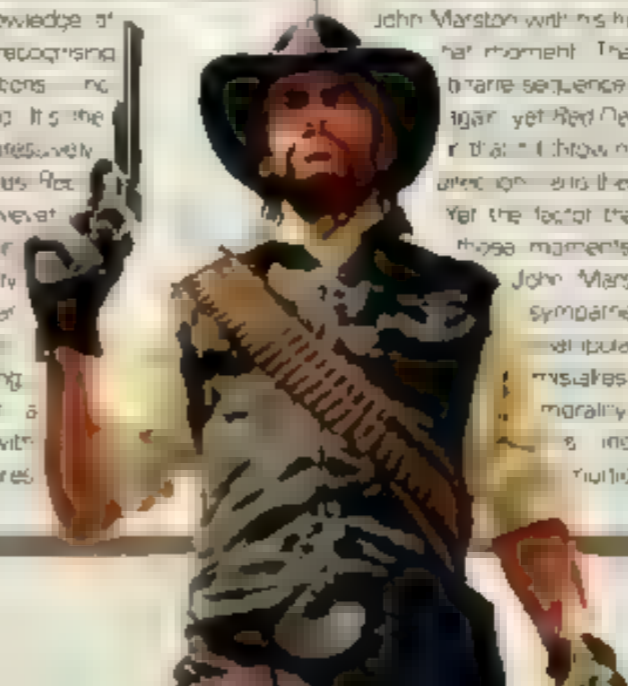
The environment feels hand-crafted, rather than big for the sake of it – it's say you're out in the middle of a desert and you've narrowly survived an encounter with wolves, just as the golden sun sets behind a wounded John Marston with his horse, the distance you own that moment. That set of circumstances and that rare sequence of events may never happen again, yet *Red Dead Redemption*'s storytelling is that it'll throw many more as dramatic in your direction, as they will belong to you, too.

Yet the factor that underlines the success of those moments comes in the portrayal of John Marston himself as a sad-eyed, sympathetic and tragic figure, being manipulated into chasing his just mistakes by a force of questionable morality. Rockstar's scriptwriting is its industry best, and it's the multi-tiered, emotional depiction of

Marston, as well as those who he encounters, that offers a whole other layer of investment for the player that a typical narrative-driven game could hope to replicate.

WHY IT'S A FUTURE CLASSIC
Red Dead Redemption represents a high point in sandbox-based game design, storytelling and contextualizing the Western for today's audience. Inspired by *Unforgiven*, *Tommy Stone* and many other cinematic sources, it's the high point of Rockstar's ongoing efforts to reconstruct America's cultural identity, as well as a videogame built on so many sophisticated systems that it always offers a compelling reason to come back.

Marston's about-to-release *Grand Theft Auto V*, which will exceed the size and detail of *Red Dead*'s world, considerably. Yet it's the amazing effort to create a convincing period piece that will always set *Red Dead* apart from the company's equally compelling sister series. It's not simply *GTA* with a Western theme slapped on. It's part homage to a cornerstone of popular culture, part reinvention of a genre that Rockstar itself pioneered, and a distinctive work that'll remain influential for years to come.



Evolution of Beat-'em-ups

Hadoukens, rising tackles and hellsweps have become familiar language for almost all gamers. But how did two people hitting each other become one of gaming's most popular genres?



Ryu flying off the ground, fist reaching for the sky. Maki's gray poison, sprouting like wings from the sides of his bald head. Sub-Zero holding a spinal cord aloft by the head, blood dripping below. There have been a lot of iconic images in the fighting game genre, the purest form of competition in videogames that pits you against your opponent in an attempt to crush them. But it all started with a humble digital boxing match.

Heavyweight Champ by Sega was the first ever 'fighting' game, a black and white arcade boxing title released in 1976, where the action was controlled by two boxing gloves and players could sway the cabinet itself to move from side to side, dodging incoming punches. Yet despite that promising start, it took a while for the genre to find its feet, but when the first wave of fighting games did finally arrive in the mid-Eighties, they all riffed on the same idea—mimicking karate and kung-fu fighting styles, which were culturally relevant at the time thanks to the sudden popularity of Eastern martial arts films.

Kung-Fu Master saw the player working their way through a tower of goons—and increasingly bizarre enemies, such as confetti balls and falling pots while *Karate Champ* recreated one-versus-one competition in a karate dojo. While those titles proved popular in the arcades, Eastern European title *Kung Fu* brought the genre to the home, via the 48k Spectrum.

"While making *Kung Fu* I was learning Assembler, but it was fun and exciting as I cannot count it as a difficulty," recalls Dusko Dimitrijevic, *Kung Fu*'s programmer. "Our main problem was how to put 'graphics' into the computer. That sounds strange now, but then there was no digital cameras, digitizers, scanners or even usable drawing software. At least we had none of those."

Surprisingly, despite the fact that the genre started to make waves in the arcades, Dusko's *Kung Fu* had been created independently of their influence, mostly as arcades in Eastern Europe had difficulty keeping up with the latest titles. "I have seen nothing even close before," Dusko tells us. "When *Kung Fu* was published I heard about a similar arcade game. A friend of mine who just

returned from Germany told me about an arcade *Kung Fu* game that even had a similar replay option. At the time we had arcade games here, but, as with everything else, we were few years behind the world, so the best we could find would be like *Pac-Man*."

The popularity of *Karate Champ* began to inspire others, such as 1985's *Way Of The Exploding Fist* and *International Karate*, both of which continued to refine the one-versus-one ideas put forth by *Karate Champ*.

But it was 1987's *Via R Kung-Fu* that was the biggest step towards the genre we recognize today. It had health bars that would deplete in chunks for each hit and, more importantly, it had a series of opponents with their own unique fighting style. Two of the opponents, *Suz* and *Fan*, would throw shuriken and fans respectively. This meant that for the first time in the fighting game genre, there was the challenge of getting past a wall

of projectiles to land damage on your opponent—something those who have faced *Guile* or *Athena* players in later Capcom and SNK games will no doubt be familiar with today.

Fighting games were now arriving thick and fast, and 1987 was a hugely important year for the genre. First was the release of the *International Karate* sequel, *IK+*, which had one-vs-one-vs-one combat. "After playing to death all the other 'karate' and fighting games in general, I

wanted to come up with something that none of the others had shown, as they were all getting a bit samey," explains Archer MacLean. "When you see fight scenes in some films set in a Dojo, they often have the other fighters seated around the edge of the fighting area, and I wanted to somehow show fighters getting up to take their turn, while the retiring player goes and sits down or is dragged off for medical attention with

his missing limbs in a basket. So, when doing *IK+* animation I watched dozens of films for movie-inspiration. So one day I'm watching Jackie Chan in the original *Cannonball Run* fighting off hordes of angry bikers and doing a double kick and I realized that I could just about make the C64's limited sprite system show three overlapping characters. Without overlap I could just draw them with bitmapped character sets, and that's why the pause mode in *IK+* 3-bit and 16-bit has six dancing characters on the screen."

But Capcom also released its own fighting game that same year, featuring hidden special moves, pressure pads that had to be hit with the strength of the move you wanted and character portraits designed by a young artist who had just started at the company, Kaji Inafune. That game was *Street Fighter*.

Street Fighter did not make a huge impact, but Capcom decided to push ahead with a sequel based on the success of another of its arcade titles released two years later—*Final Fight*. American arcades found themselves flooded with those trying to clean up the streets of

At that time, most of the machines in the arcade were fighting games

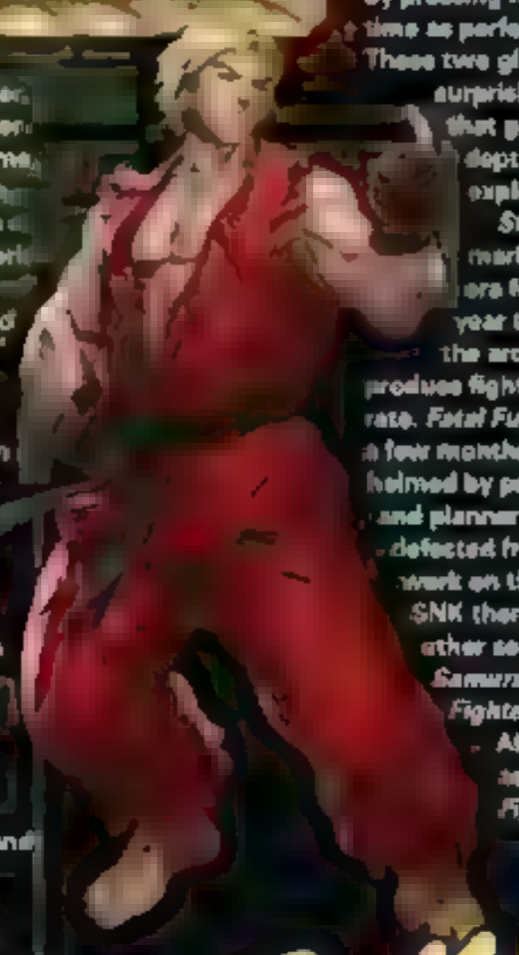


Ultimate Street Fighter Remastered by Capcom

Miami City with Cody, Guy and Hagen. Although it was a side-scrolling fighter, rather than a 'traditional' fighting game, Capcom saw the proof it needed that there was potential in the genre for a character hit, immediately starting work on a Street Fighter sequel.

When Street Fighter II was released in 1991, its impact was immediate. It began with an iconic cast of characters who were all selectable, from American hero Guile to Brazilian monster Blanka. Each fighter was a mixture of childhood stereotypes and quirky design that has endured to this day, backed by memorable theme tunes such as the workman-like percussion for Zangief and the bellowing elephants on Dhalsim's stage. Each fighter also had their own distinct fighting style and trademark moves, such as Guile's sleepaway tactics or Zangief's attempts to close the gap and land a spinning piledriver.

Enhancing the appeal was a bug discovered in testing. The glitch that allowed players to cancel normal attacks



into special moves to create combination attacks. This was left in as a hidden feature but would become a staple of the game and eventually the genre itself. Another less known glitch, known as the CPS-1 glitch (as it only worked on the CPS-1 arcade board), allowed players to chain together light attacks by pressing hard punch at the same time as performing the light attacks. These two glitches combined to create a surprisingly deep combo system that gave Street Fighter II the depth it needed to ensure it exploded as a competitive game.

Street Fighter II's release marked the start of a golden era for the genre. In the same year that Capcom's sequel hit the arcades, SNK also started to produce fighting games at a dizzying rate. Fatal Fury was actually released a few months before Street Fighter II, helmed by producer Takashi Nishiyama and planner Hiroaki Matsumoto who defected from Capcom following their work on the original Street Fighter. SNK then followed Fatal Fury with other series such as Art Of Fighting, Samurai Shodown, The King Of Fighters and The Last Blade.

Although they wouldn't prove as popular globally as Street Fighter II and its various

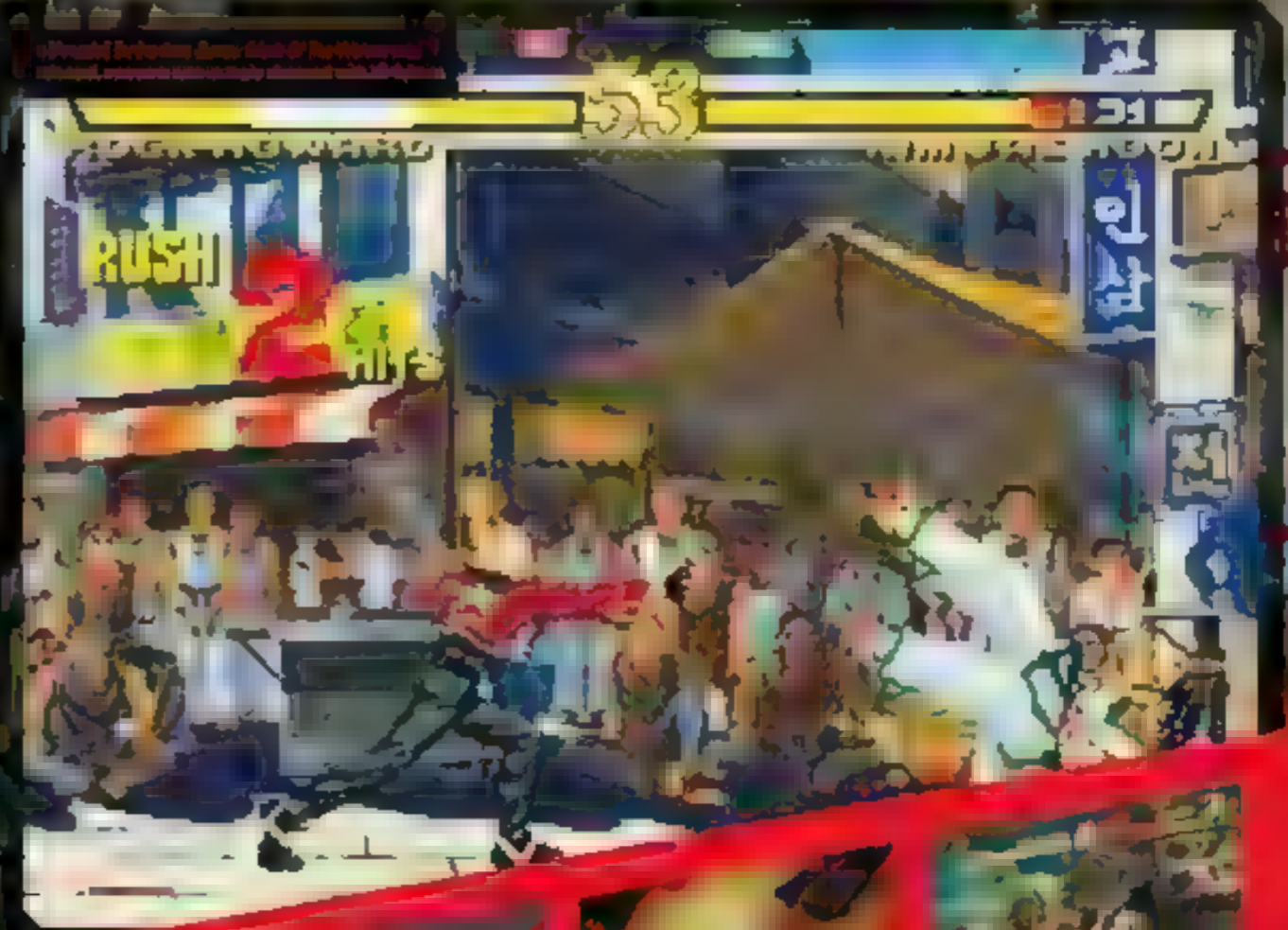
sequels, SNK's titles found strongholds in Mexico, South America, Pakistan and China, where they usurped Capcom's famous series. It was all thanks to the Neo Geo MVS format. Unlike CPS-1, Neo Geo MVS was cost effective for coin-op operators, who could swap games and artwork for these new titles as they were released. Neo Geo carts were cheaper than typical arcade boards, plus there were plenty of bootlegs in circulation. All this contributed to arcades in poorer countries being able to afford Neo Geo MVS titles, and also charging less per credit, ensuring their popularity.

But advancing technology saw a whole new battle begin within the genre. "At that time, most of the machines in the arcade were fighting games, and there was usually a line waiting to play them," recalls Masaaki Hashino, current producer of the SakiCalibur series. "The Street Fighter series, as well as other 2D fighters, were the most popular. But players who became interested in the detailed, frame-by-frame strategy involved in 3D fighters started to become drawn to Virtua Fighter and Tekken."

Street Fighter II might have scored a clean victory over its 2D rivals, but the fight between Virtua Fighter and Tekken was far more

like Street Fighter II. Virtua Fighter's impact in the arcade was immediate. It was the first polygon-based fighting game, which meant it had a whole wealth of new ideas and tricks that hadn't been seen before. Players could triumph by forcing their opponent out of the ring and replays of knockout blows were shown after each win. Fighters had fighting styles vaguely modelled after real martial arts, but most of all, it was the sheer novelty factor of a 3D fighting game that brought Virtua Fighter praise and attention. No one had seen anything quite like Sega's fighting game. It was a huge hit.

One company that felt it could reckon with Virtua Fighter was Namco. Having established arcade racing dominance with Ridge Racer in the same year as Virtua Fighter's release, Namco turned its attention to fighting games. Namco and Sony Computer Entertainment had been working together on the SYSTEM11 arcade board, which was based on the same hardware that would be used in Sony's upcoming console, the PlayStation. The first release on the new arcade board was Tekken in 1994.



10 Most Influential Games

KARATE CHAMP
1984 ■ Sega
The first 'real' beat-'em-up. Karate Champ was a one-on-one combat set in a dojo with other camp students. Sweeping around the edge of the screen, slowly shredding minimal karate competition. There were no health bars, with victory awarded to whoever landed the first punch.

THE ARKUN-FU
1985 ■ Konami
The first real one-on-one fighting game. The Solving games genre was never truly, *Wo Ai Jing-Fu*. Instead, health bars were a series of opponents with their own distinct special moves and fighting styles. These opponents also threw punches and kicks, making this the first fighting game where you had to dodge them to get close and land hits.

IKU
1987 ■ Another Namco
Although it was one-on-one, two combat circles were in this one. The concept of the fighting game in the West, leading up to the game to come. It was a new and pure way for the audience global moment of late this.

STREET FIGHTER II
1991 ■ Capcom
The game that revolutionized the idea of the world. It was a simple idea, but it was a simple idea that was a simple idea. It was a simple idea that was a simple idea. It was a simple idea that was a simple idea.

MORTAL KOMBAT
1992 ■ Midway
Although its gameplay was based on feared of high level of grip, that was a lesson learned the point. The simple nature of the game, the simplicity and the arcade game. Mortal was a huge hit for Midway, which meant it was the almost that to Street Fighter II for many years.

VIRTUA FIGHTER
1993 ■ Sega
Following the success of Virtua Fighter, Sega made a big bet on the arcade board. The first fighting game to feature 3D polygon graphics. It was a breath of fresh air that showed the future of a gameplay and visual experience. It was coming.

SUPER STREET FIGHTER II TURBO
1994 ■ Capcom
Many has been sold since Street Fighter II already. What's significant about Super Street Fighter II Turbo, the last entry in the Street Fighter II series. It was the last of the series, the last of the series. It was the last of the series, the last of the series.

TEKKEN 3
1997 ■ Namco
Although Virtua Fighter initially proved more popular, Tekken benefited from the popular PlayStation platform. For its console release, Tekken 3 is what Namco effectively ended the battle between the two series, breaking its rival over 7 million copies sold and becoming the leading 3D fighting game.

GUILLER
1998 ■ Sega
Although it was not the first console fighting game, it was the first console fighting game. It was the first console fighting game. It was the first console fighting game.

SUPER SNASH BROS
1998 ■ Nintendo
Although not the first console fighting game, it was the first console fighting game. It was the first console fighting game. It was the first console fighting game.

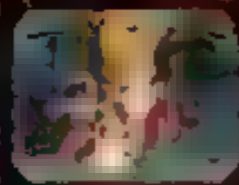
STREET FIGHTER III
2000 ■ Capcom
This effectively cemented the birth of fighting games on the home console following the genre's success in the arcade. Although it had many characters such as G-Fighters and Abel plus a new Power Gauge, it was successful in that it was the first console fighting game to reach a million copies on PS2 and Xbox.

Although they were both distinct in that they were 3D fighting games, there were plenty of differences between *Virtua Fighter* and its new rival. *Tekken* had no ring-outs, with the stages endlessly stretching out when fighters moved away from the centre of the stage. The cast was more eclectic than *Virtua Fighter*'s, with *Tekken* sporting the likes of Yoshimitsu, King and Kuma. Most importantly, *Virtua Fighter* had a three-button system for punch, kick and guard versus *Tekken*'s system of a button for each of the fighter's limbs, something that made the eventual PlayStation port seem like a natural fit for Namco's brawler.

"It was the era of early polygon technology, so we were focusing on development methods for creating 3D humanoid character models and the animation technology necessary to make them move, as we saw this as core technology needed for the next ten years to come," explains *Tekken* director Katsuhiro Harada. "It seemed a logical choice of button assignment to naturally control a character in-game. It was also a good match for the button layout of the PlayStation controller. But the arcade version was developed first, so the arcade button layout and that of the PlayStation controller are different."

Released on Sony's console a year after it hit the arcades, *Tekken* benefitted from weaker competition against the likes of *Battle Arena Toshinden*, becoming one of the flagship series for PlayStation and selling millions. *Virtua Fighter*'s platform was Sega Saturn, limiting its exposure and potential audience. The success of their respective consoles proved to be a crucial turning point in the battle for 3D fighting game dominance because, in the arcades, there was a clear winner.

"Honestly, Namco didn't have much experience with fighting games at that time, so not a lot of thought was put into the strategic elements typical of



Virtua Fighter (left) and *Tekken* (right)

current fighting games," enthuses Harada. "I'll be honest, *Tekken* was pretty much overlooked in the arcades, and didn't really trend among the arcade players. In Japan, it is usually the case that a fighting game has two machines connected back-to-back. But for unpopular fighting games, sometimes it is just on one machine alone, as the lack of popularity hardly merits using two arcade machines and the space they require. *Tekken* was exactly like that, and most often was on a sole machine with no one playing. There was one arcade in Shinjuku where it was popular, but that community was probably the only one in Japan at that time. At that time, *Virtua Fighter* was quite popular in Japan and had a decent following. Honestly, I was jealous, and it was an object I looked at with both fear and respect."

Virtua Fighter's dominance drove Harada to do anything necessary to help *Tekken* gain more exposure in Japanese arcades. "I assembled a character costume with the company's money, and organised tournaments and helped hype the game while co-playing as that character," Harada tells us. "*Tekken* was so unknown that I had to resort to those drastic measures to gain attention for the game."

But just as 2D fighting games were struggling for some semblance of balance – *Street Fighter II: Championship Edition* had a ridiculously overpowered M. Bison while 'SNK boss syndrome' meant that those playing either *Fatal Fury* or *The King Of Fighters* on their own didn't escape at all lightly either – 3D fighting games also found balance to be a fairly elusive element at times.

"One interesting episode is that *Tekken*, as a competitive fighting game, was so unbalanced that rather than guarding King's elbow attack it was common consensus to crouch and set it on purpose, rather than guard," continues Harada. "The same with Nina's Knee Kick. Players would move forward instead of guard because, for some reason, you could counterattack Nina if you did so. When you hear this now it sounds crazy but, at the time, it was common knowledge to everyone. Most fighting game players try hard to guard everything, but expert *Tekken* players would let a move hit them on purpose. I still remember to this day the perplexed look on the faces of *Virtua Fighter* and *Street Fighter* players when seeing this."

With the success of *Tekken* on PlayStation giving Namco a new sense of confidence, it quickly moved onto a new 3D fighting game series to accompany *Tekken* – the weapons-based brawler *SoulEdge*. Despite the immense competition in the fighting game genre, Hoehne says that the team didn't feel intimidated by joining the increasingly competitive genre.

"Our goal was to create a weapon-based fighting game that made more use of the 3D playing field for its fighting mechanics, and featured high-end graphics with more improved lighting," he explains. "As such, there was more a feeling of excitement about trying on accomplishing this, rather than a feeling of pressure. Also, we put quite a bit of effort into the story setting and character development to attract more female gamers, and others who wouldn't normally try out a fighting game."

Hoehne says his personal highlight was watching footage of *SoulEdge* as the Namco fighter made its first public bow at Japan's Amusement Machine Show in 1995: "A game designer, still a new recruit, used the linked assets available at that time to create [the video footage]. He used the controller to

carefully and precisely control the camera for cinematic flare, and then put a lot of care into editing to surprising effect. We were all very happy that many people were looking forward to the game after seeing the footage, and the motivation of everyone on the team greatly increased. A lot of ideas began to come to us at that time as well. This perhaps led to our pursuit of a high level of graphic quality and features that, as a result, saw the implementation of the well-received interactive ending sequences, and the editable opening sequence in the Dreamcast version."

SoulCalibur found a new home outside of the arcade on Dreamcast, as 3D fighting games continued to soar on console with the *Tekken* and *Virtua Fighter* series joined by new upstart *Dead Or Alive*. But eventually, and perhaps inevitably, the power of the fighting game began to wane. As *Street Fighter* grew increasingly complex with its combo system (Alpha series) and defensive options (*Street Fighter III*), only hardcore fans stuck around. Financial troubles saw SNK collapse, later reborn as SNK Playmora. Even 3D fighting game



SoulEdge (left) and *Street Fighter II* (right)

series had their momentum slowed with mediocre entries – *Virtua Fighter 3*, *Tekken 4* and *Soul Calibur III* all disappointed fans.

The biggest factor in the genre's decline was how the status of fighting games in arcades was changing. In an attempt to draw crowds from consoles, arcades began to turn away from fighting games and towards unique arcade cabinets that would provide experiences you simply couldn't get at home. The growth of competitive play thanks to tournaments like EVO and Super Battle Opera helped fighting games stay relevant during a lean period but, ultimately, muscled out of arcades and without decent online play, fighting games found themselves in limbo. Xbox Live was the first step on the road to recovery with online play for *Capcom vs SNK 2: EO* and *Street Fighter Anniversary Collection*, but it would take the invention and evolution of GGPO technology to provide the first real alternative to arcade play.

As we all know, *Street Fighter IV* would bring the genre back with a vengeance in 2008, and we now have fighting games spanning crossover titles (*Street Fighter X Tekken*), new IP (*Skullgirls*), HD re-releases (*Darkstalkers Resurrection*), free-to-play (*Tekken Revolution*) amongst familiar faces such as *Tekken*, *SoulCalibur*, *Dead Or Alive* and *The King Of Fighters*. Progress has come at a cost. Almost all of the top fighting game arcades outside of Japan have closed their doors, such as New York's Chinatown Fair (2011), London's Trocadero (2011) and LA's Family Fun Arcade (2012). The cost of 2D animation has seen Capcom now default to a less interesting '2.5D' style of visuals, with only *Arcevs* and *The King Of Fighters* flying the flag for hand-drawn animation.

But some things never change. The cry of "Shoryuken!" as Ryu flies into the air is still common. Miihachi's hair still makes no sense. Sub-Zero is still fond of solving disagreements by reaching for spinal cords. Hopefully, the rebirth of the fighting game genre means that we'll see a whole host of new iconic images in the years to come.



The Street Fighter

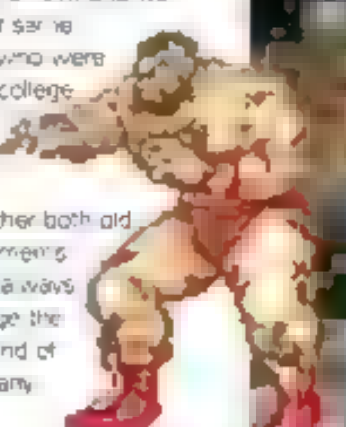
Yoshinori Ono, Street Fighter's producer, looks back at its past and successful revival

We've heard that you played a lot of Final Fight in the arcades when you were younger. What do you remember most about the arcade scene in Japan when Street Fighter II was released?
At that time, competing in games meant racing games or high score games, so *Street Fighter* really brought a physical element into the virtual realm. The characters' graphics and especially the tools that the game made available to players had never been seen in an arcade game up until then, and it all exploded in popularity with *Street Fighter II*. The virtual battles in-game even led to numerous fights in real life. That is how passionately and seriously the players took these tools of competition, and I remember it all vividly. Players who won could keep on playing without paying any more money, but those who lost had those ten seconds that the timer was counting down in their mind, in more money and continue or give up altogether. The mixed feelings of humiliation from losing but also the financial implications of putting in more money to rematch was a big hit to the players' hearts and wallets.

What do you think it is that makes Street Fighter II so special compared to other fighting games?
I believe it's because each of the characters are so unique. The combination of their personalities, moves and background stories all work together to create a fantastic universe. Characters such as Baldo and Dhalsim don't exist in real life, but they were created with human elements in mind. In this way, the emotions that were put into each character resonate with people and their memories of the game. Also, it was the first game that really provided the user of tools for players to use to compete with each other. *Street Fighter IV* continued the legacy of the DNA that came from *Street Fighter II*.

What was it that made Capcom decide to bring Street Fighter back with Street Fighter IV?
I personally loved this series and started working on it since *SNK's 3rd Strike*. One of the reasons I joined Capcom 20 years ago was because I wanted to create *Street Fighter* games. Before *SNK IV* was released, out of the 2,000 Capcom employees, no one wanted a new *Street Fighter* game except for the 50 people on the development team. I thought, "Since the situation was so stacked against us, we wanted to make it revivable, even more laughs." And the continued support of the media and fans who keep asking for a new *Street Fighter* greatly contributed to the revitalisation of the series.

Street Fighter IV has been the most popular fighting game this generation and revived the genre. Why do you think it was so popular?
I believe it's because the original *SNK* and *SNK II* created the foundation for fighting games, but *SNK IV* became so popular. The concept behind the creation of *SNK IV* was a return to the beginning. The college students who spent hours of their *SNK's* playing the home console version of *Street Fighter* all fathers now, and we wanted to let them experience that same nostalgic feeling. Also, the people who were kids when *SNK* game came are now college students. We wanted to provide a new generation of players with them as well. The intent was to create a product that brought together both old and new. When you look at tournaments and even this year's Evo, you can always see new talent rising up to challenge the old guard. Because we have this kind of history with the series, I believe many people can enjoy the games.



Hall of Brawlers

THE COOLEST FIGHTERS FROM THE PAST 30 YEARS



RYU

Ryu has served as the iconic character for fighting games as a whole, let alone Street Fighter; while 'Hadouken' and 'Shoryuken' have become iconic terms. The Japanese for hurricane kick? Not so much.



TERRY

SNK's first 'lead character' in fighting games, Terry Bogard is defined by his sleeveless red top, red Fatal Fury cap and lines like "Are you okay? Bustaseer Wolf!"



HASHIMARU

The most reliable character in Samurai Shodown's cast of esoteric fighters, Hashimaru has brought his samurai sword to the likes of Capcom Vs SNK 2, SNK Vs Capcom and Neo Geo Battle Coliseum.



LEI-LEI

Felicia, Demini and BB Hood are equally well known, but Lei-Lai is a more unusual example of a popular character as she's so unorthodox and difficult to use effectively.



HIBIKI

The most well known of the Last Blade crew, thanks to an appearance in Capcom Vs SNK 2 where she emerged as one of the stronger characters and certainly one of the most unique.



BONNE JENET

SNK's English pirate girl first emerged in Gears: Mark Of The Wolves and has been a fan favourite since. Her unusual fighting style, relying on tricky air moves, means that she's fairly unique in the genre too.



FALCON

Just about every character in Super Smash Bros is recognisable thanks to Nintendo's heritage, but the top-tier terror who dominated Melee tournaments and has come to represent the series is Falcon.



PAUL

Although many Tekken characters have stood the test of time, Paul's hairdo and easy-to-learn playing style (endless Deathfists for some players) meant he stood out from the Mishimas as a fan favourite.



KARATE CHAMP

The simple karate practitioner was one of the first fighting game characters and his design has endured through the likes of SNK's Kim, Takuma and Mr Karate.



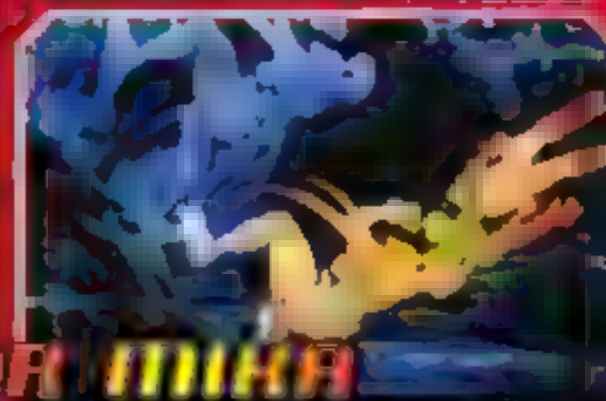
SOL BADGUY

Guilty Gear's answer to Ryu popularised the term 'dustloop', a combo that sees Sol looping the same corner combo that involves the Dust Buster.



Q

Street Fighter III brought in a wealth of new faces, but it was Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike's Q who really captured everyone's imagination because no-one really knew who he was. Man? Robot? Both?



R MIKA

Alpha's most requested character who hasn't been brought back in Street Fighter IV, R Mika had an unusual fighting style where she was a grappler with a series of throws that had delays on them.



AKIRA

He looks like a bland karate dojo-style brawler but his fighting style, a series of fast, powerful blows with extremely complex execution (at least up until VFS), meant he was an expert-only character.



SCORPION

Mortal Kombat's ninjas, Scorpion and Sub-Zero, were the hottest (or coolest) characters since the beginning. It was Scorpion's 'get over here!' spear move that became a series trademark though.



VOLDO

SoulCalibur's characters tend to share equal billing but Voldo is the one image that while burns your eye long after playing. Thanks to his odd neutral stance and fetish for bondage gear.



KASUMI

Clearly the face of Dead Or Alive, Kasumi has been a series mainstay and the first character to appear on all promotional material such as trailers and artwork.



ATHENA

She started in 1986's Psycho Soldier but eventually crossed over to the King Of Fighters series, where she became one of the most popular and recognisable faces in the franchise.



KYO

Whether it's Kyo or Iori, into your pick for a King Of Fighters lead character. These two serve as the Ryu and Ken of the series, at perhaps the Ryu and Akuma - Ryu being the 'hero' and Iori the evil, deranged character.

CLASSIC MOMENTS

The Legend Of Zelda: A Link To The Past

PLATFORM: SNES DEVELOPER: NINTENDO RELEASED: 1992

When Link is first cast into the Dark World, it's all a bit surreal. Transformed into a pink bunny and then with a blob and a friendly friend for company, seems like a random one-of-a-kind piece and nothing more. But then, with *A Link To The Past* and the Dark World for a second time, it's clear: This is a set piece. This is a place they're here to work. Although based on the same map, the two worlds are wildly different in terms of layout and population. New dungeons appear, and the expected enemies still look familiar, but as an amek, success would rely upon clever use of portals and the Magic Mirror, which can be used to swap planes of existence and, although this mechanic has been carried over to other games, can be traced back to Link's original magic blowing, dimension-hopping antics.



BIO

Oh, it's just one of the greatest games of all time, that's all. Returning to the format of the original game rather than its divisive sequel, Nintendo created an open world that was endlessly enjoyable to explore and one that rewarded curiosity and persistence wonderfully. Even today, after so many sequels, *A Link To The Past* holds up as perhaps the definitive Zelda experience—modern interpretations have tended to become formulaic and gimmick-heavy, so this freedom adventure (where success doesn't always hinge on the last tool you found) is rightly regarded as a timeless classic.

MORE CLASSIC A LINK TO THE PAST MOMENTS

Gotta Catch 'Em All!

Enemies are useful, enough when you can just grab them for a quick energy refill, but that moment when you realise that you can actually use the bugger groups with you is one that you'll never forget. To catch the guy who gives you the bug net isn't exactly subtle about his uses, but ever so, swiping a fairy out of the air and stopping him a jar for later was an incredible sensation. And the surprise of being revived by one you've even better.



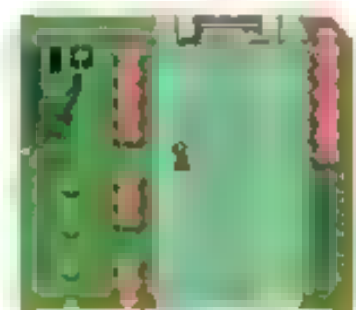
A Kind Of Magic

Hardly in the game, it doesn't feel like Link's magic would be going to be very important, but it lets you set fire to stuff and light up path markers, which is handy when anyone other than Link is in the way. Link's magic is more the further reaches of Hyrule and you'll find numerous ways to put that meter to a more impressive use, from the Handy Ice Rod to the secret mechanism that grants Link unique abilities.



A Link To The Past

Top-down games of the time had a tendency to be slower and more considered than side-scrolling others. While it doesn't exactly show it, the basic goal of the introduction of the Pegasus Boots from him into the game is great. It's a thing that means you must race through certain areas and complete any objectives your own. But we'll never forget how long it took us to realise that changing into boots could make things feel that bloody fast.



Obey Your Master

It's all Master Swords, this. Master Swords that can be used at the speed at which you can get your hands on them here is amazing. Three or four dragons, three easy bosses, and that glowing worm thing is a three-fold increase of the reward between you and the mighty weapon, which gives you a perfect sword when at full health and allows him to take on Ajah's minions, reach the Dark World.



The SIMS

Even now, The Sims remains the second best-selling PC game of all time – beaten only by its sequel, The Sims 2 – solidifying its position as one of the games industry's most influential titles. Adam Barnes speaks to its creator Will Wright about how these digital people were born



Although Will Wright is one of a handful of game developers who have had a major impact on the industry with The Sims and SimCity, it's impossible to overstate

It's surprising to consider that *The Sims* – the best-selling PC franchise of all time – nearly wasn't made. Its creator, Will Wright, had a battle on his hands as he tried to develop that vision. It was, in Wright's own words, "a struggle". But, it was something he wanted to play, and he knew that others must feel the same; they did about *SimCity* after all. But, how did such a unique concept for a videogame – namely the manipulation of tiny virtual people and their everyday lives – come to be?

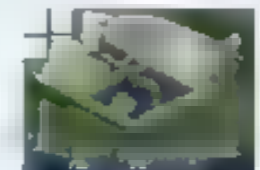
It was always interested in architecture and architectural design. Will Wright explains, and after *SimCity*'s initial success, he wanted to do something that was more about designing structures. So originally, it was more meant to be an architectural version of *SimCity*. As we went down that path, I started thinking I needed some way to score what I was that you were building, and so I knew I needed little people living in these structures that you were designing. I spent a great time thinking about how to make the behaviour of these people very robust, interesting and plausible, no matter what kind of environment you put them in. Creating these tiny people – AI characters that would interact with the structures built within the simulator – took about two years of Will's life. In between a variety of other projects, *SimCity* had become a huge success and as a result, Maxis had a little trouble to find a game that I wanted to see made. For Will Wright, that would end up being *The Sims*.



"I always thought of it kind of as a human flocking simulator"



programmers, and nobody really cared so they said 'yeah'. I wasn't just his fellow developers that he had to convince either, with the game concept that would turn out to be one of the most important PC games of all time struggling to even appeal to focus testers in the earliest stages of development. "We even did a focus group back in '93," states Will, "where we were focus testing about five different game concepts. I remember with the other four the focus testers said 'oh yeah, it was pretty good, we would play that', but when I came to *The Sims* and we were describing the idea to them, they were at university, and that's such a stupid idea, we would never play



IN THE KNOW

- PUBLISHER: EA GAMES ARTS
- DEVELOPER: MAXIS
- RELEASED: 2000
- PLATFORM: VARIOUS
- GENRE: LIFE SIM

that, we hate that idea. It totally bombed in the focus group. Will always believed in the concept however, and with his secret team of programmers he set about creating an early proof of the potential. He added in will-things and things that were something like *The Sims* when you can play it and you can see it, adding that it's always difficult to really sell any idea forged in the back of a designer's mind. It was difficult for others to really get what Will's was going to be. In his mind, he had this conception of what it would be like, but to expect somebody else to understand and have that concept, it's a hard thing. And we been in the same position before, where somebody told me some idea they had and I just didn't get it and it sounded kind of stupid. I know the guys who made *MySims* and they were showing me one of the early versions and it was like 'what is this? it's a slideshow', but once I saw the final version I played it and loved it. But when they were describing it to me in the very early stages, I just couldn't wrap my mind around it."

As development went on, it was clear that Will needed to flesh out these ideas, and the key way to highlight what it was all about was through these virtual characters. The Sims themselves were caricatures of real-life representatives of what we might look like to an omniscient being capable of a higher level of thought. Quaint, simple perhaps, but entertaining all the same. While part of this was down to the limited resources available at the time, there was also a conscious decision to keep the Sims sub-real to create a real impression of people but to ensure that it was enjoyable at the same. "We understood

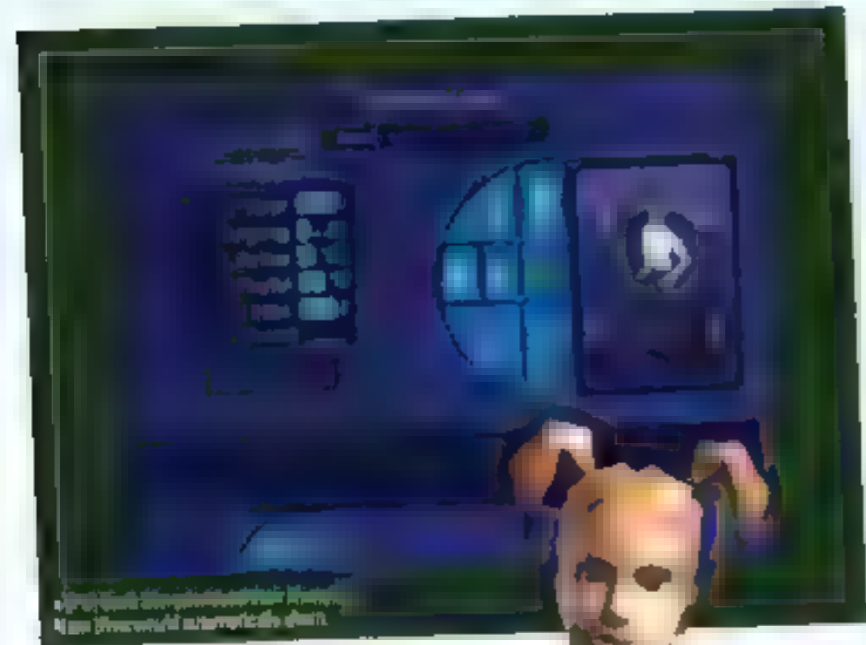
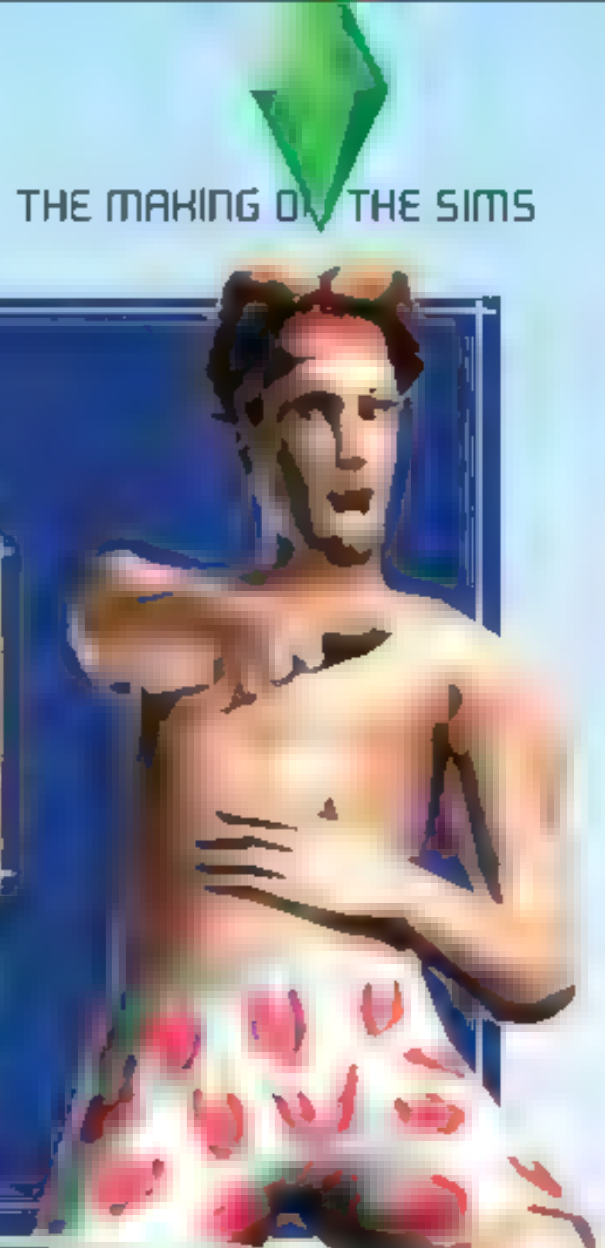


EXPANDING THE SIMS

The Sims' success steamrolled and, inevitably, expansion packs were released. At the time, The Sims was the game with the most expansion packs ever, surpassed only by later versions of the game.

LIVING IT UP AUGUST 2002 ■ Months after the release of the original game came Living It Up, which gave players a party scene, including performance and dancing.	HOUSE PARTY APRIL 2003 ■ Starting the tradition of seasonal expansion packs, House Party introduced the ability to get the Sims drunk and socialize with them.	HOT DATE NOVEMBER 2003 ■ As the series expanded, Hot Date focused on romance, including dating, flirting, and seducing.	VACATION MARCH 2002 ■ This pack brought a whole new world to the Sims, including beach, vacation, and more.

UNLEASHED NOVEMBER 2002 ■ Unleashed was one of the most popular expansion packs, introducing a new world, the Sims' favorite, and a new type of creature.	SUPERSTAR MAY 2003 ■ With this pack, players could become famous and win awards.	MAKIN' MAGIC OCTOBER 2003 ■ The first expansion pack for The Sims to introduce a new type of magic, including spells and potions.



► that at some point we wanted a certain level of abstraction." Will tells us. Part of that had to do with the amount of detail that we were adding to the game. It always thought of it kind of as a human-flocking simulator. The level of behaviour that we could achieve was like if you were to look out of a balcony window and see people down on the street, you could probably get a sense of when they're shopping, when they're arguing or some level of understanding the behaviour but not necessarily every little detail. And that was the target for me: to try and simulate these characters at that level.

Even when the iconic language that your virtual characters spoke in-game was purposely chosen to enable the player's imagination to represent the idea of real-life and not a mimic. One of the key decisions was the fact that they wouldn't actually be speaking English; that we would actually have them speak their own language. This is one of those situations where the computer is pretty good at simulating penmanship and really bad at simulating other things. We could have had them speaking pre-recorded lines or something

like that but I would have destroyed the illusion of reality pretty quickly... because we could only do that level of AI. By having them speak this kind of gibberish, your human imagination actually fills in the blanks and will imagine the conversation. That's really an example of us offloading a portion of the simulation to the human imagination—the portion that the computer's very bad at.

But how did Will go about creating a whole new language? Initial tests focused on more exotic languages as Will tried to hone in on the sound of The Sims. "We actually had some Ukrainian programmers working for us and I had recorded some of them speaking Ukrainian and it was a little too obviously slavish and then I started experimenting with different languages. Hebrew was nice but we couldn't find any Hebrew voice actors. Estonian was very interesting because Estonian is very hard to locate in sounds interesting, exotic and like a real language but you can't really associate with any geographical area—but we only found one Estonian voice actor. And eventually I found these two more voice actors. They came in and we described to them that we wanted

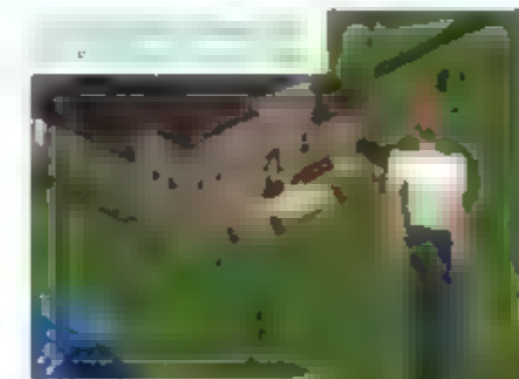


“I spent a lot of time thinking about how to make the behaviour of these people very robust, interesting and plausible”
 Will Wright

something that sounded like a real language but not really. Together they kind of developed what later became known as Simlish.

Most would recognise a conversation in Simlish if they heard it—and a large part of that is its comic—and unique—approach to language. As it turns out, The Sims was a pretty big success, most notable for its ability to attract people who weren't otherwise interested in games. Sisters and moms were jumping in to try out games for the first time, an unusual occurrence in a medium that was, at the time—primarily, at least—the bastion of teenage boys. "It was actually kind of surprising," says Will of The Sims' success figures. "The Sims would either be a pretty big success or a miserable failure. I didn't think

there was going to be a lot of in-between. Really, the key to it was getting players into the right mindset of seeing this game as something that was more creative and about enjoying and a little less about winning. The Sims was released in February 2000, and two years later it had notched up over 15 million sales. The reach of videogames had officially grown to a much broader group of players. Worldwide, the franchise has now sold over 70 million—and the original version accounts for almost 25 per cent of that with 16 million sales. As EA prepares to release a brand new game in The Sims 4, it's clear that the foundations that Will Wright laid 13 years ago have an everlasting appeal. It's unlikely to disappear.



THE UNCONVERTED

Arcade games that never made it home

SPATTER

Developer: Sega Year: 1984 Genre: Maze game

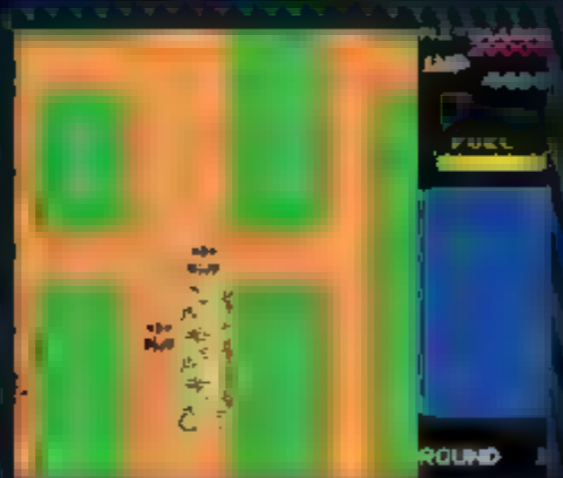
Spatter's Japanese title roughly translates as 'Sanjin Sanchan - Mr Tricycle', and while it's obvious why Sega thought a name change might help the game's overseas fortunes, it's less clear why the publisher settled on the name it did. It is possible Sega intended to call it *Spalater* - its gameplay certainly involves squeezing and being squeezed - but got landed with *Spatter* after consulting a Japanese to English dictionary. What is apparent, though, is Spatter's high quality and uniquely Sega vibe. On first inspection it appears to be a straightforward maze-based collect-'em-up, but the clever mechanics underpinning the deceptively simple layouts of Spatter's bright stages produce a far more interesting challenge.

As you might have guessed from the game's Japanese title, the player takes charge of a tricycle manned by the orange hooded Sanjin Sanchan, with your objective being to collect flowers that grow within a series of garden mazes. Naturally, this upsets the various gardeners whose hard toil you're making a mockery of and they soon try to stop your floral thievery by chasing you down using go-karts, helicopters and interrollers. So far, so Pac-Man.

But, as mentioned, Spatter has fresh mechanics up its sleeves, specifically the imaginative defence mechanisms you're given to play with.

First up, you can ram into the side of the fences you cycle past, which would be pointless if not for the fact that they're elastic. Fences offer two possibilities: you can bend into them while a go-karting opponent on the other side is opposite you, which locks them out of the maze, or you can leapfrog any foe on your side of the fence by riding into it and over them. Your second defence - breezeblocks that line the maze - are optional in early rounds, but essential in later ones, as fences don't damage helicopter-piloting adversaries. Still, later levels feature indestructible steamrollers, but a carefully lobbed breezeblock can see off weaker enemies or block their progress.

Spatter also offers bonus rounds between stages where you pick fruit and deliver the flowers you've collected to Sanjin's girlfriend. On reaching her, you hold hands and bew, another of Spatter's many idiosyncrasies. These might explain why it's unconverted, but don't make it any less worthy of a reevaluation.



CONVERTED ALTERNATIVE

RALLY-X 1991

Rally-X involves a vehicle-based maze chase and clearing its stages requires collecting all the items in the maze, so it's a grotty decent alternative to Spatter. Take the MSX version out for a spin.



CONVERTED ALTERNATIVE

DESERT BREAKER 1992

Desert Breaker is a top-down shooter that takes place in a desert environment. It's a decent alternative to Spatter, but it's not as original as the original game.

CONVERTED ALTERNATIVE

ALIEN SYNDROME 1987

Alien Syndrome is a maze shooter that was converted to home systems. It's a decent alternative to Spatter, but it's not as original as the original game.

Inspirative mechanics distinguish Spatter as more than a simple maze game. Elastic fences offer players creative ways of avoiding or shunting enemy vehicles.

Quality opponents are a Sega staple, and Spatter's no exception. The foes you first encounter ride go-karts and interrollers.

People hearing about video game violence should be shown Sanjin Sanchan intently collecting flowers on his trusty tricycle. Don't mention the breezeblocks, though.

Spatter's look and feel can only be described as Sega-esque. Its wild colour scheme, pixelated sprites and playful atmosphere are straight out of the Fantasy Zone.

BEST KEPT IN THE ARCADE

PIG NEWTON

Developer: Sega Year: 1983 Genre: Platformer

Pig Newton was developed for Sega's G80 coin-op system, an interesting setup with raster and vector versions that allowed arcade operators to change the game in a compatible cabinet by swapping one CPU board for another. In truth, the games produced for the vector variant are more fondly remembered than their sprite-based counterparts. This is a little unfair, as some G80 raster titles are decent games. Pig Newton, however, is a missed opportunity. Its gameplay and graphics are sound, but its unresponsive controls make navigating the main character an act of sheer machoism.

The aim is to collect bird eggs while dropping apples onto the heads of two hungry wolves trying to chop down the tree you're hiding in, but time after time the game's control set is left wanting. One cheap death after cheap death as you attempt to compensate for the eponymous Pig Newton's delayed and unpredictable reactions, followed by a chip tune 'Wah, Wah, Wah!' that rubs salt in the wound. It's a shame really, as with tighter controls the game could have been a lot of fun. As it stands, though, there would have been little demand for a home version.



UFO SENSHI YOHKO CHAN

Developer: Sega / Vic Tokai Year: 1986 Genre: Shoot-'em-up



Yohko Chan is a shoot-'em-up game. What's not to love?

Vic Tokai is perhaps better known for developing Psycho Fox and Decap Attack for the console market, but it also developed a handful of arcade titles, the majority of which were published by Sega.

UFO Senshi Yohko Chan, or 'Extraterrestrial Soldier Yohko Chan' in English, is probably the best coin-op effort Vic Tokai produced and is by far the most original in

terms of gameplay. The best way to explain the game is by saying it genre-blops. For instance, its opening stage takes place in a top-down maze where blasting invading extraterrestrials is rewarded with coins that allow you to buy upgrades in a shop. Aside from extra lives and time, more powerful firearms are on sale, with newly purchased weapons becoming selectable alternatives rather than replacements for your trusty laser pistol. Conversely, some later levels are side-scrolling platformers where dexterity and timing play as big a part in your survival as firepower. The reason the game remains unconverted, however, has probably as much to do with its uniquely Japanese flavour as its unusual blend of genres.

CONVERTED ALTERNATIVE

ALIEN SYNDROME 1987

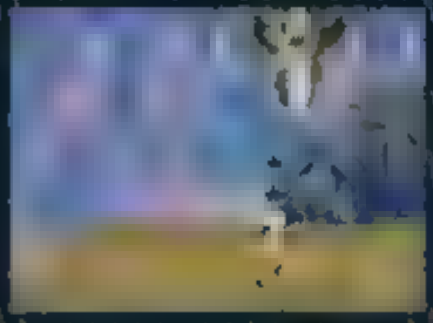
Admittedly, it's tough to find an equivalent to UFO Senshi Yohko Chan that was converted to home systems so, instead, get yourself Sega's widely ported maze-shooter Alien Syndrome and scrolling platformer Wander Boy and then play one after the other.



CONVERTED ALTERNATIVE

MERCS 1990

MERCs should clearly be your first port of call when seeking out a home-based alternative to Desert Breaker. As well as the Mega Drive version, MERCs was also ported to various home computers. Play the Mega Drive outing though, as it's absolutely fantastic fun.

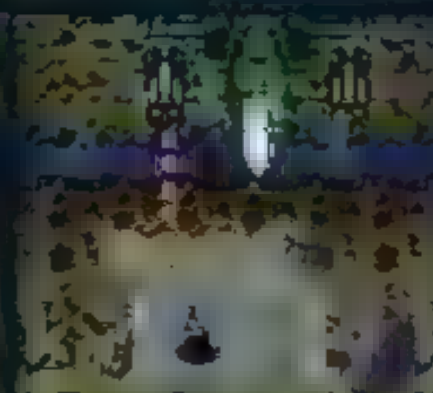


DESERT BREAKER

Developer: Sega Year: 1992 Genre: Run-and-gun

One glance at Desert Breaker tells you that it's Sega's take on Capcom's top-down shooter MERCs. In fact, the similarities between the two games may go some way to explaining the rarity of the Desert Breaker coin-op. Sega's title certainly resembles MERCs enough to have made their lawyers nervous, and legal concerns likely influenced Sega's decision to license and port MERCs to the Mega Drive rather than converting Desert Breaker.

Inspiration and unconverted status aside, Sega's homage delivers on gameplay and does so while tweaking the tried and tested MERCs formula. One obvious change is that you can flee from overwhelming firefights by hitting a dash button, which grants a temporary speed-boost and invulnerability. And as well as being able to upgrade



Desert Breaker is a top-down shooter. It's a decent alternative to Spatter, but it's not as original as the original game.

your firearms to more destructive variants, you can also exchange your grenades for special weapons. More importantly, though, the game's courteous enemies and imposing bosses provide a stiff and varied challenge, which is everything you want from a no-nonsense run-and-gun title.



In the chair with...

COLIN PORCH

Colin Porch saw it all go wrong at Imagine Software and helped it go very right at Ocean. He tells Paul Drury about dungeons, dragons, vengeful wives and why he's still head over heels in love with making games

The archetypal games coder of the early Eighties may have been a scruffy teenager tapping away in his bedroom while his mum made his tea, but Colin Porch was into his thirties when he discovered the joys of videogames. He swapped a career in finance for creating games at some of Britain's best-known software houses. He was there when it all went pear-shaped at Imagine Software and then hopped across Liverpool to spend several years at Software Projects. His longest and most fruitful stint in the industry was with Ocean in Manchester, where he worked on such successful arcade conversions as *Gryzor* and *Operation Wolf* and brought the wonderful *Head Over Heels* to the C64, Atari ST and Amiga. Colin welcomed us into his Northamptonshire home, which has a trusty ST upstairs, but sadly no porch

wonderful... ordered one even though it was £85... which was a hefty amount in 1980.

What was it that convinced you to take the plunge?

I played the games on the console and just thought I could do better! It was a tiny little cartridge and had a DIN socket on the back where you could plug a tape recorder in. I found out very quickly I'd need to learn machine code to program it. It didn't even have an assembler. You had to work out the hex code and type in B6, A9 and so on.

It came with a keyboard then?

[laughs] No, you had to join the two [joystick] controllers together and use the buttons on them!

That sounds like hard work, Colin.

What was even worse was the instruction book it came with was full of errors. It had clearly been written in English by people who didn't speak English. I could've written a better one myself after a few months. But the processor was a Signetics 2650, and it's one of the best processors I've ever used... much better architecture than the 6502. I'd end up using on the Commodore 64!

Did you manage to write any games for the Radofin?

Yes, a few. The best one was

Castania Gold Rush... which was like *Pac-Man*... reverse... but those rectangles on screen and each contained a certain amount of cash. If you can complete a trail all the way round, you get the cash, but these Indians are also patrolling the maze and if they come across your trail, they wipe it out and on later levels they can fire at you. There were sprites and sound effects... all squeezed into 4K of memory!

It sounds to us like quite a playable little game.

I did write to Radofin saying I'd made this game but never got a reply. Then I saw an ad in our local paper from a company called Anik wanting computer games. It was run by a guy called Richard Andrews in Northampton which wasn't too far from me in Kettering, so I rang him up and said I hadn't got a commercial product - only a handful of people must have had the Radofin and the hobby module... but I was pretty confident I could convert it to another machine. He came over and saw it and told me Commodore was very accommodating to programmers wanting to make games for their machines but Atari wasn't helpful at all. So, for my birthday, my dad bought me a Commodore 64 not an Atari 800!

So you converted the game to the C64 and Anik distributed it?

That was the idea! Mr Andrews took a

At Ocean, I was twice as old as most of the other programmers. They used to call me Fossil!



DM: Colin's C64 defeated California Gold Rush, though he certainly didn't make it right



Would it be fair to say that you came to games programming later in life?

Well, at Ocean they used to call me Fossil... or Grandad

How rude.

I don't mind. I mean, I was twice as old as most of them. I was 35 when I first used a computer. It was in the late Seventies and I bought a Radofin console, which was cheaper than an Atari. It had *Pong* and *Connect 4* on and games like that and, after a while they released a 'Hobby Module'. The advertising just said, 'buy this, you can make your own games!' It sounded



shapes and colours. I think Imagine thought they'd spotted a niche in the market for games for toddlers.

Imagine had many interesting ideas but it all went horribly wrong and ended in bankruptcy. When did you realise things were falling apart there?

The first indication was when my wages didn't go into the bank! I'd joined them in January 1984 and by May, problems were becoming apparent. I just taken out a mortgage and I thought I was going to lose my house!

Were you there when the bailiffs arrived at Imagine?

Yes, I was at work that day. I don't drink so I wasn't at the pub like most of the others. I used my own C64, two disk drives and a printer at Imagine and I had the Dickens of a job convincing the bailiffs they were mine. They asked me for receipts and I said, 'come on, look at it, it's hardly state of the art stuff!' They took my word at the end. I left the building with all my equipment under my arms and that was that.

How did you end up working for Software Projects?

There was an advert in the *Liverpool Echo* and about 20 of us applied for Imagine for two jobs. It was a lot smaller operation but they took four of us on, maybe out of pity. I was interviewed by Alan Maton and Tommy Barton (co-founders of Software Projects with Matthew Smith) and I think I got a job because I'd actually got some completed projects under my belt. Not everyone from Imagine had...

Did you see very much of Matthew Smith back then?

He'd come into the office, but not very often. I never saw him working on a game, just on things that interested him from an academic point of view but with no practical



Colin Porch was working on Dragon Lair when he left Imagine Software Projects for Oceanic.

might say it takes one person six months to make a game, six people should take one month, but it doesn't work like that. They're taking over themselves, trying to use the same memory and variables.

Did you have any involvement with Bandersnatch and Psychopse, the infamous 'mega-games'?

I was friends with people like Jon Gibson and Eugene Evans, who were working on those videogames. They'd come and join in and see what the rest of us were doing but we weren't allowed access to their suite of offices. They became known as 'The A-Team'. I remember seeing them once, all sat on the floor trying to link up these SAGE computers to share data. They never got it working though.

Colin, is that you, rubbing your eyes and shaking your head in despair about two minutes into the Commercial Breaks documentary that caught the dramatic implosion of Imagine Software on camera back in 1984?

[Laughs] Yes, that's me, using a SAGE linked to a Commodore 64. I was working on a game aimed at three to four-year-olds, getting them to match



Colin's California Gold Rush and his brother Frank's Yahtzee, both for the ST, were released through Anik. Neither of them received a penny for their work.

“ Dave Lawson at Imagine Software asked me if I'd taught myself to code. I said, 'we've all taught ourselves, haven't we?' ”

application. He spent weeks writing a programme that had little grains of sand, or maybe it was snow, falling from the top of the screen, collecting at the bottom. That was it.

Your first game for them was Harvey Smith Showjumper. Erm, show jumping isn't a sport that you would normally associate with videogames.

It was Tommy Barton's idea. I just said, 'Do you think a show jumping game will sell?' He said, 'Yeah, if we put the right son on it.' The whole concept was mine after that, how the game looked and worked. The horse was done by my wife Janet. She used the famous sequence of photos taken by Muybridge (circa 1872) to show a horse galloping. Effectively, those pictures were turned into pixels. It was painstaking work!

Having a household name like Harvey Smith on the cover must have helped publicise the game.

Actually the week before it was released, Harvey Smith walked off with someone else's wife and that was big news back then! Suddenly we got word that Boots, WHSmith and an enormous number of high street shops wouldn't stock our game! That had to affect sales.

We bet you felt like giving Harvey one of his own trademark two-fingered salutes. Did you have better luck with your involvement with Dragon's Lair?

We had an actual arcade machine in a corridor in the Software Projects offices. We'd play some and then talk about how to do it on the Commodore 64. There had to be compromises

obviously. I'd be pacing up and down in the office in the early hours of the morning sometimes, thinking of what to do.

The original Dragon's Lair for the Commodore 64 was largely a port of the Coleco Adam version, but it looks like you had more of a free hand to develop your own levels for the sequel, Escape From Singe's Castle.

Both games were a group effort. For the first *Dragon's Lair*, I produced the primitive sound driver and some of the tunes, and worked on coding a couple of the levels in conjunction with John Darnell. Certainly, most of the coding was his. We developed this technique so while you were playing one section, the next one was loading into memory. For the sequel, I remember designing the opening rapid level. I had the problem of making Dirk disappear as he went over each layer of water to reappear smaller, on a lower level. It's not as simple as it sounds!

You left Software Projects before Dragon's Lair II was released. What happened there?

I had a disagreement with Tommy Barton over a Christmas bonus, which he promised and then never paid me. I went back after Christmas – this would be 1987 – and was working on *Singe's Castle* when I got a call from Colin Stokes from Oceanic who I knew from Imagine days. He offered me a lot more money and he said they'd pay the commuting costs from Liverpool to Manchester, so I said I'd love to join them. Tommy was not happy. He refused to pay me the holiday money I was due, so I

It was never too late to return to Software Projects.

copy of the finished game and asked me if he could borrow my colour printer, which were like gold dust in the early Eighties, to start producing advertising materials. I said okay and that was the last time I ever saw him. I tried to write to him and even went to his house in Northampton but found it empty.

It sounds like you were gazumped like the gold prospectors of old. Didn't that put you off the software industry a bit?

I saw it as a local rip-off. This would be 1983 and I'd just seen an advert for Imagine Software in Liverpool who actually wanted to employ people. I went up to see them and showed Dave Lawson (joint founder of Imagine Software) *California Gold Rush*. He was quite impressed and he asked me if I'd taught myself to code. I said, 'We've all taught ourselves, haven't we?' He laughed and said 'When can you start?'



Colin Porch's actual Harvey Smith Showjumper for the Commodore 64. The wife Janet rode it.

What project did Imagine assign you to?

Dave mentioned this 'universal programme'. The idea was it would be a framework you could put any game into. It'd have a beginning, a central hub where all the items in the game would be processed and a loop to handle things as they change in the game.

It sounds like a very early example of a 'development tool'.

Effectively that's what it was, and I did get it working. My understanding was that they'd taken on loads of staff because they had the deal with Marshall Cavendish to produce a game a month to be given away with a magazine they were publishing.

Of course! That's why they needed a tool to help produce games as quickly as possible.

Even with the tool, I don't think it was ever feasible. Simplistically, you



The C64 Operation Wolf was an impressive data conversion, winning awards and critical praise.

* YOU ASK THE QUESTIONS

We quizzed Colin in his Northamptonshire home with your questions and he duly responded between bouts of coding on his Atari ST...

Northway: Was it easy to convert Head Over Heels from one CPU architecture to another?

No, it was very tricky. Jon Ritman's code was tremendously well commented so I knew in English what it was supposed to do but I didn't understand the mechanics of how it worked! But that didn't matter as long as my routines did the same thing. We'd feed data in and if it came out the same for mine as I did his, we'd cracked it! I was on the phone a lot to Jon if I had a problem and he'd help me as much as he could.

Merman: Was there a lot of code sharing among the in-house team at Oceanic?

Apart from people working on the same project, not really. We didn't tend to do that, though I think Paul Hughes got his hands on stuff! I don't think it was a matter of rivalry. It was just, 'this is what we're working on, that's what you're working on.' We'd frequently discuss methodology of how to get a particular effect working, though. Like that anti-scrolling device I used for *Operation Wolf* – I was happy to share that with whoever wanted to use it.

Mayhem: How difficult was it getting Operation Wolf into a single load rather than a multi-load?

We used quite a lot of compression techniques. A lot of picture data, beieve it or not, consists of zeroes. If you've got a stretch of ground the same colour, you can just say 'I want this colour forty times'. It was a challenge, but it was something we knew we had to do right from the start.

FGasking: Was your brother Frank Parch a programmer too?

Yes, he wrote a game called *Yahtzee* in BASIC for Anik, the same company I did *California Gold Rush* for and with the same result. We never got a penny from them!

DRS: Was programming on the Game Boy very different to the C64?

They had similar processors but I thought the Game Boy was a really awful machine to work with. To keep the costs down, Nintendo had used the same registers or processors, call them what you like, to do different things at different times during its cycle. One processor might be responsible for updating graphics and the same one would do something with the sound but at a different time in its refresh cycle. If you tried to change one when it was handling the other, it just collapsed.



Colin Porch has kept the development data from his Oceanic days, here we have *Dragon's Lair* and *Operation Wolf*.

08/12

2' 25" 765
1:01' 35" 624
2' 1" 111
3' 1" 111

Rage Racer



PlayStation
Namco
1997
Rage Racer was the game I'd waited for ever since playing Stunt Car Racer on the Spectrum.

Geoff Crammond's title featured a series of increasingly outrageous and thrilling in the Rollercoaster track and its ridiculous climb and drop. It was similar to the top compared to other racing games where tracks consisted of the usual straights and corners with the odd curve or dip. When Rage Racer appeared on PlayStation its tracks were something from an extreme ride - this was the closest thing to Stunt Car Racer available on the 32-bit era.

The game doesn't mess about. Having passed the first straight you're soon climbing

towards a mountain. The entrance next to a cascading waterfall. Drive inside. A track left and right. It's the right hand. Over this City that offers the most spectacular ride. The road snakes down through the tunnel before rising steeply upwards forcing you to drop gears to maintain speed as you approach the summit. It's even more impressive later when you rock the reverse tracks and get to zoom down the pass.

There are lots of things I love about Rage Racer. The customisation options add to the gameplay without being fussy. And as you progress through the classes GP Mode you'll encounter some thrilling rock and rock battles for first place. The game also introduces the first proper appearance of series mascot Reiko Nagase. But if you're a fan of Rage Racer's all about the ride. ★

TIME LIMIT
8' 18"

051 mph

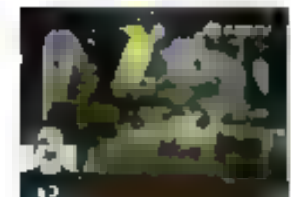




>> It's been a bit of a quiet month, so we've decided to mainly focus on the rather triumphant return of Shadowrun. We also take a gander at Capcom's remake of DuckTales, Ubisoft's Flashback update and the PC version of Castlevania Lords Of Shadow



PICKS OF THE MONTH



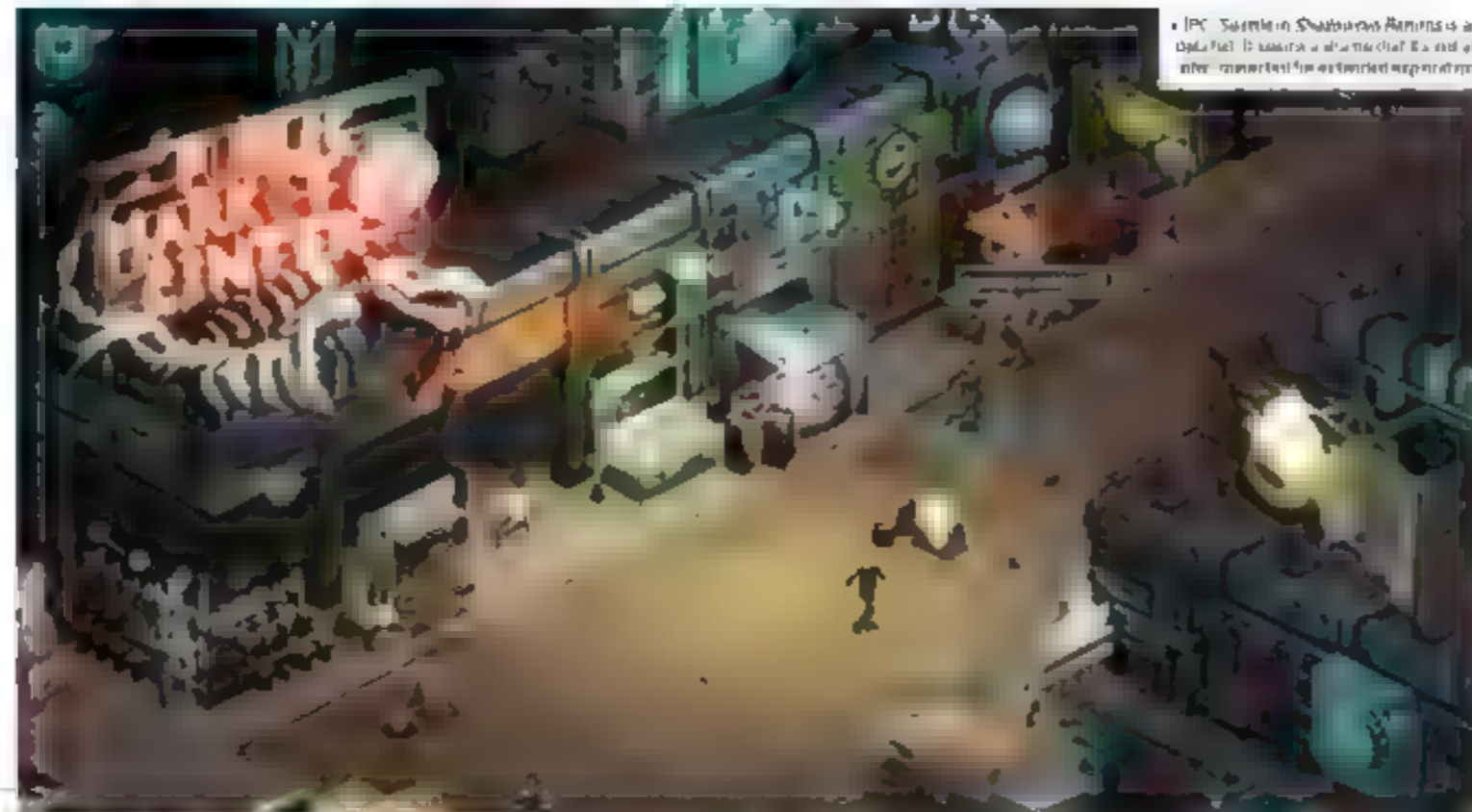
DARRAN

DuckTales Remastered
A enjoyable piece from WayForward that looks beautiful and contains many of the gaudy success stories



DAVID

Shadowrun Returns
It has been a long time, but the war for Shadowrun Returns is certainly worth it. A great Kickstarter success story



• PC: Sammie in Shadowrun Returns is as detailed as ever, with a lot of interesting details for extended exploration

Shadowrun Returns

NEVER, EVER, CUT A DEAL WITH A DRAGON

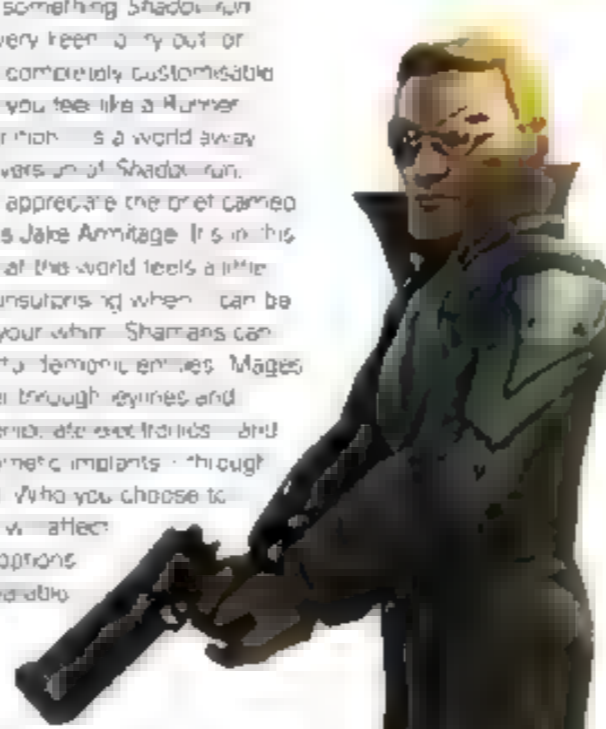
- INFORMATION**
- **FEATURED SYSTEM** PC
 - **ALSO AVAILABLE ON:** DS, Android
 - **RELEASED:** OUT NOW
 - **PRICE:** £14.99
 - **PUBLISHER:** HARBRAINED SCHEMES
 - **DEVELOPER:** HARBRAINED SCHEMES
 - **PLAYERS:** 1

It's probably best to start with a warning. *Shadowrun Returns* isn't much like the videogames you remember, at least on a technical level. Where both the SNES and Mega Drive equivalents opted for a more real-time oriented form of RPG combat, *Shadowrun Returns* favours turn-based – more akin to the rules of the tabletop version that spawned the series in the first place.

But that's a minor aside, because everything you could hope for in a *Shadowrun* game is here, something that pleases us greatly. This dystopian cyberpunk world is as rich as it ever was, and the efforts made to make it more alive and fantastic are living proof that you don't need voice acting, impressive lip-synching or a lot of cut-scenes to create a world that you want to explore. This is thanks to the

quality of writing, which manages to flesh out a character before they ever start speaking. Outside of the short descriptions that appear in the hover-sensitive dialogue system that lets you craft a sense of your own character too. Picking one option over another doesn't necessarily restrict or benefit you in any way, but it sure as hell makes you feel a little more attached to what could have been a just as easily have been a one-dimensional script.

The underlying leveling-up system benefits from similar personal choices too. You've a host of races and classes available to you, from the cyber and while you may pick Mage from the beginning you could end up more akin to a sword-wielding Street Samurai, something *Shadowrun* experts will be very keen to point out themselves. It's completely customisable and helps make you feel like a Runner worthy of recognition in a world away from the SNES version of *Shadowrun*. Though fans will appreciate the brief cameo from that game's Jake Amittage. It's in this customisation that the world feels a little more tangible, unsuited when it can be manipulated to your whim. Shamans can summon powerful demonic entities, Mages can boost power through leylines and Deckers can manipulate electronics – and those with cybernetic implants, though the digital world, who you choose to accompany you will affect which of these options and if not available



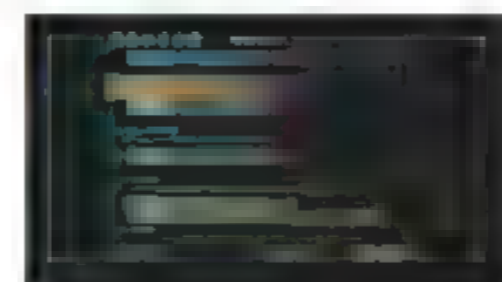
Similar games you must play

<p>Final Fantasy Tactics (1997)</p> <p>Though <i>Final Fantasy Tactics</i> will come to introduce mechanics of strategy RPGs that were heavy and less than today's, it was <i>Final Fantasy Tactics</i> that popularised it – competing with the idea that the name 'Final Fantasy' had during the PlayStation era. Nonetheless, it was great fun to play, even though you may wish a bit for the PSP version.</p>	<p>Ogre Battle: The March Of The Black Queen (1993)</p> <p>This unique blend of strategy and RPG hasn't been matched since. It received limited popularity in the West when it came out of the SNES, but the depth of its combat system is worth your time alone. Luckily, it is available on the Virtual Console, giving you a chance to play the strategy RPG.</p>	<p>XCOM: Enemy Unknown (2012)</p> <p>Another classic franchise had a modern re-imagining, recently, as XCOM: <i>Enemy Unknown</i> (and its sequel) is up just level it when everything that can go wrong, always wrong. More strategy than RPG, it is worth a game that you need to play, if only to support those brilliant minds at Firaxis.</p>	<p>Fallout (1997)</p> <p>A completely different RPG system, <i>Fallout</i> popularised post-apocalyptic games but shows a level of similarity with <i>Shadowrun Returns</i> in its depth of writing, its world and its combat. The world and its combat. The world and its combat. The world and its combat.</p>	<p>Inquisitor (2000)</p> <p>This was first released in 2000 but took three years to complete (in English). It shows a level of similarity with <i>Shadowrun Returns</i> in its depth of writing, its world and its combat. The world and its combat. The world and its combat.</p>
---	---	---	---	---

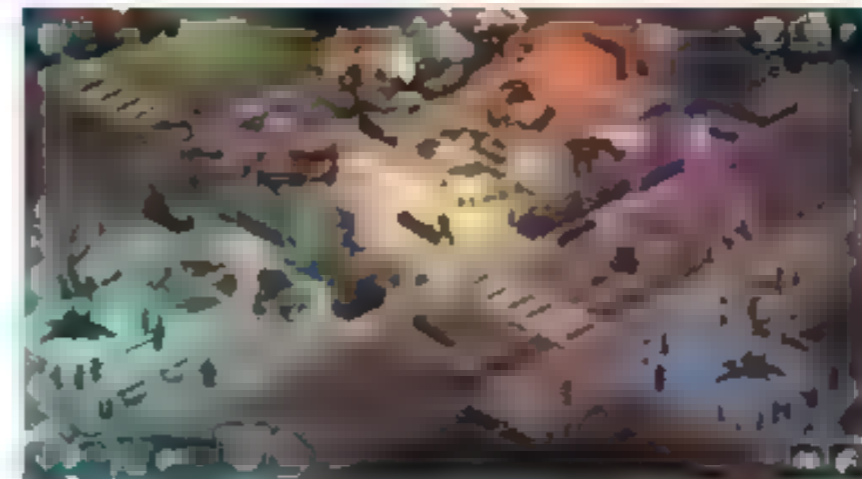
to you, again, trying it to a game based on your choices.

Combat itself is pretty tricky, especially earlier on. Don't expect to steamroll groups of Gangers and Corp baddies until you've leveled up a good deal, and equipped the gear to go with it. Thankfully it's not too complex to comprehend, each character gets two actions a turn – whether moving, shooting, resting or what have you – and after that it's the enemies' turn. The key is sensible movement and protection, a similar system to last year's *XCOM: Enemy Unknown*. Certain environmental objects can provide either basic or full protection, while sensible manipulation of pillars and walls will block the line of sight of potential attackers.

Where *Shadowrun Returns* does differ from *XCOM* is in its exploration and it's here that it resembles its retro predecessors much more. Each environment is a huge, often quite vast – is a separate instance in itself, but with side quests, incidental characters to chat with and short battles to conquer. It has, then, the same an style as *Shadowrun Returns* is spot on, an outstanding upgrade for anyone raised on the glimmering glory of the SNES version. There's plenty of detail throughout each



• PC: Your main troubles at a bit of a level, allowing you to unlock more skills and classes (provided you have enough money)



environment, whether draped in a bit of digital artistic flair that plaques things in much the same way as drugs and fancy corporate lobbies and office structures. You, as *Shadowrun Returns* will experience them all, and *Harbrained Schemes* has done a bang-up job of creating a world filled with phenomenal goodies to explore. It's just a shame that many of these places are little more than passing visits, since in most cases you'll be shipped off to whatever location you're next needed at. It does feel like this new *Shadowrun* would've been better suited to being more open, as its SNES and Mega Drive versions were, to keep that sense of pace throughout your experience. It's a minor distraction, perhaps, but a notable one for fans of the original.

Sadly, the story of *Shadowrun Returns* isn't quite as grand as we would've hoped either. Though its writing is excellent, the tale itself is lacking somewhat. You'll be tasked with identifying the cause of an old friend's demise in the hopes of winning 100,000 Favor, *Shadowrun*'s

• PC: Combat is simultaneously simple to understand and challenging to master. Just the way it should be.

• PC: This is taken from the user creation *Shadowrun Returns*, and is pretty impressive. This will be one to keep an eye on.



DIFF HISTORY

• *Returns* found success on the SNES. *Shadowrun* was a popular game and paper RPG. It eventually received a number of follow-up games that were it miserably did not do each other. The biggest thing was FASA Studio's massive failure on SNES. J&H did it, where it tried to put the RPG into a box and FPS.

WHY NOT TRY

SHADOWRUN RETURNS



POPE CHILDREN AWAKENING (2002)



currency. This winter, with a number of related events, primarily among them being an unusual string of murders. It's intriguing that much is true, but with a warning as rich as *Shadowrun Returns*, it feels like a bit of a shame for it to be such an important hurdle.

But then, this is just the beginning for *Shadowrun Returns*. Released alongside the game is the very same editor used to build the main campaign and, while more campaigns are planned by Harbrained Schemes as D.C. It's here that we should be excited. Fans will be free to craft their own stories, and someone has already begun rebuilding the entire SNES original in the Steam Workshop, support that *Shadowrun Returns* really begins to shine.

In a nutshell
It's a short campaign, but this remains a must play, thanks to solid combat mechanics, brilliant writing and a bright future with the in-game editor

Adam Games

>> **Score 85%**

>> The scene's latest news and reviews



After spending a fair bit of time with the Amstrad 16K ROM entries, I've realised just how much I like games programming competitions; the only 'problem' they present when it comes to writing reviews is that, with all of those new releases, I usually can't cover absolutely everything I'd like to here. Hopefully the solution I've gone for this time works so it can be used for future ABBUC, RGCD 16K or MSXdev events



AMSTRAD CPC 16K ROM COMPETITION



The Amstrad CPC 16K ROM Game Development Competition ran on the CPC Wiki website between January and June 2013 and, as the name probably suggests, all prospective entrants were required to cram their game into a mere 16K during that six month period. Although this doesn't sound like a lot, in the right hands there's enough room in 16 384 bytes to produce a solid game - which is demonstrated by the two puzzle and two action games that were released before the deadline.

To start with there's *Overkaban*, which is an implementation of the classic warehouse-based puzzle Sokoban, where the objective is to take the crates off the ground at an unusually snappy warehouse floor and, without getting any inventory stuck against walls, push all or them to the marked storage areas. The classic Sokoban levels have been used so the difficulty is high straight from the first floor, but there are no time or movement limits to worry about, so players have quite a bit of thinking time to work out a way to beat the stage and how to optimise their strategy for the lowest number of moves.

The second puzzle is a sedately paced, *Super Mario* style, no power like control of a cute looking insect that must be guided around to collect coins and a key in each stage in order of progress. To make things a little trickier, there are one-way doors and slippery tiles that limit how the insect can move and some of the stages have static traps and mobile enemies to avoid as well. Taking away inexpressly in the background is a time limit, so pausing is only as though isn't advised.

Cyber Maki is a first-person space shooter set in the near future where mankind is after harvesting an alien world of giant chucker. The creator's address is:

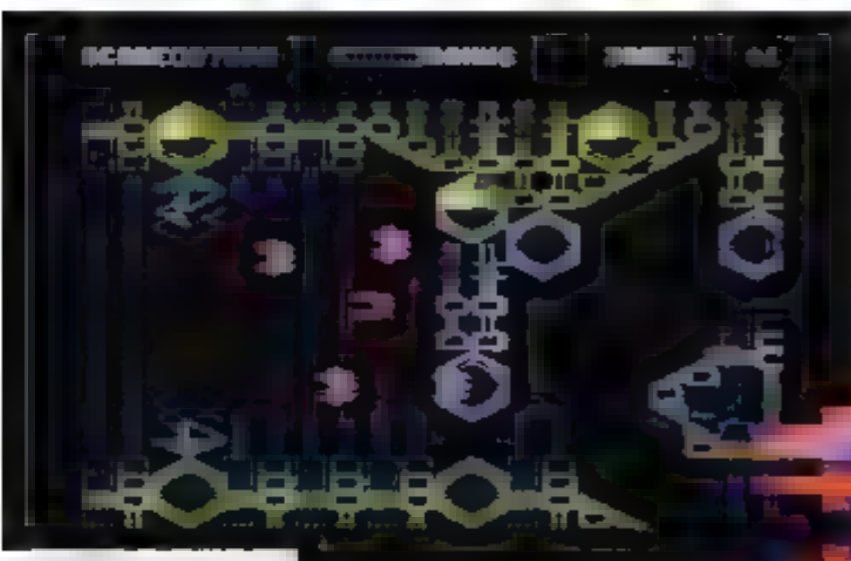
extinction now, armed to defend itself from the poultry uprising. Swashers of space-suits, evans, tap their way past life signs of the last remaining impulse cannon that must be used to save the date! by firing well-timed shots to blast the invaders into nuggets.

Finally, we come to *Relentless*, a horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up from Paul Akeley. *Koostra* has far away with almost all the gangs. It's a shooter that incessantly jets attack waves and ground-based gun targets at the player with fast, smooth scrolling and colourful graphics. The default difficulty setting offers a decent challenge, which is pretty much what we've come to expect from the author on *Score and Need Of Time*.

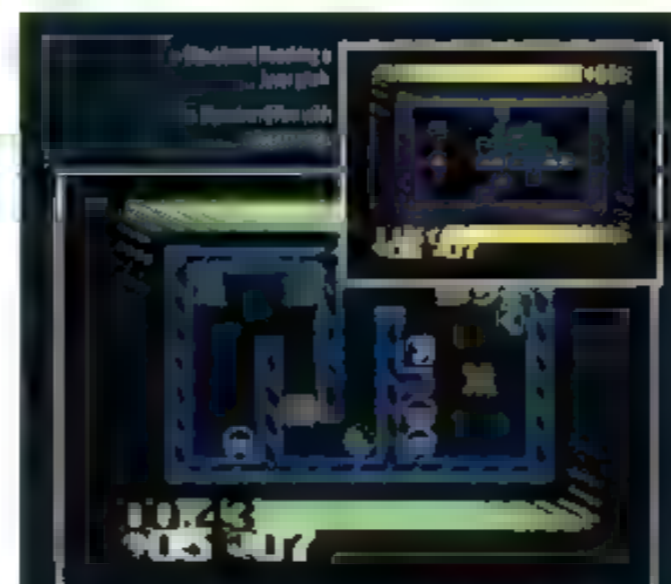
Looking at the competition as a whole we feel that if we went well, four games is reasonable for a first go and, although it's a shame that some of the announced games like *The Dungeons Of Count Roland* were completed, who was released is impressive both technically and to play. *Over Relentless* is the best of the bunch, but the other three are very enjoyable. 85%



FORMAT: AMSTRAD CPC
DEVELOPER: VARIOUS
LINK: WWW.CPCWIKI.COM/COMPETITION
RELEASE: 2013
PRICE: FREE
REVIEWED BY: J.K.



Screenshot of a game from the competition.



THE SPECCIES

FORMAT: SPECTRUM | DEVELOPER: TARDIS REMAKES
DOWNLOAD: WWW.MAGNETPUSH.COM | PRICE: FREE

The *Speccies* are cute little critters that were struggling to get to their various colour-coded homes until help arrived in the form of a huge purser that could guide them around. What makes the career's job more difficult is that, although they're adorable little beings, the average *Speccy* isn't particularly bright and, when set in motion, will just keep on rolling until an obstacle gets in the way. Manoeuvring all of the *Speccies* to the correctly coloured pad on each stage takes some forward planning, clever use of the environment, and sometimes another *Speccy* as a temporary barrier to line moves up correctly.

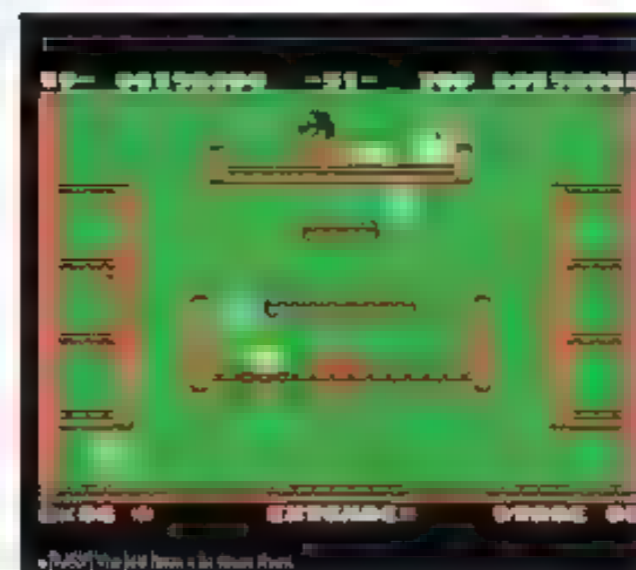
The *Speccies* was put together by Spruce, a long-time who was behind the well-received port of *Dingo* to the Spectrum a couple of years ago. The result of his labour and some great graphics from Craig Stevenson is a good looking and loving puzzle. 85%

MALAIKA

FORMAT: MSX | DEVELOPER: RELEVO STUDIOS
DOWNLOAD: WWW.MAGNETPUSH.COM | PRICE: FREE

The platformer *MalaiKa* has been created by Alexander MalaiKa, the only person evolved enough to write here on. Anybody taking on the alien horde unarmed wouldn't stand the slightest chance, but MalaiKa's resourcefulness usually keeps in her front she can stun enemies before running over them for the kill. Each stage is a series of platforms, usually by side locations and a bit of time limit to defeat them. Vanquished foes leave behind pinkies and, if the letters for the word extended are collected, a new life is handed out.

Anyone who has played *Bubble Bobble* should find the gameplay familiar with stunned enemies recovering to become more aggressive if not dealt with promptly and stages where the wrap-around play area comes in handy to reach otherwise inaccessible platforms. *MalaiKa* is a single screen action game with appropriately bright colours and cheerful sound.

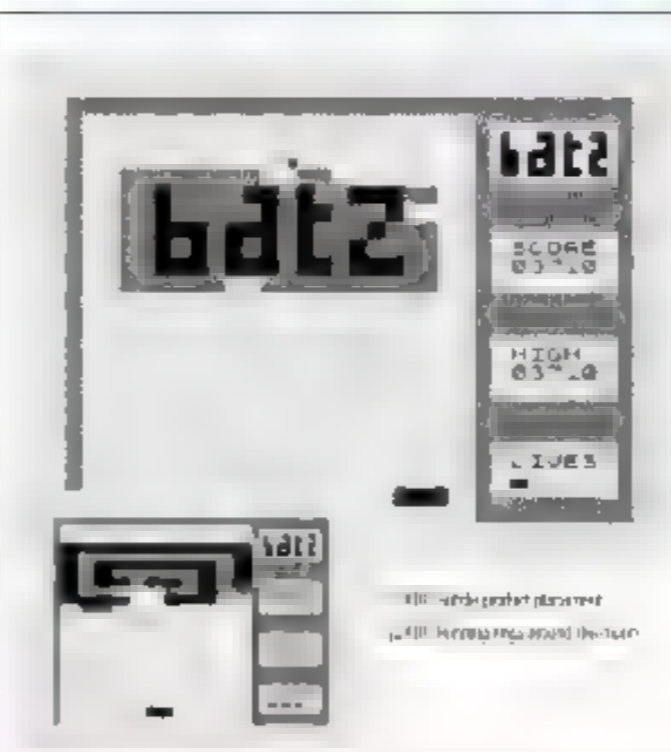


BATZ

FORMAT: EXPANDED ZX1 | DEVELOPER: PETERC
DOWNLOAD: WWW.MAGNETPUSH.COM | PRICE: FREE

Batz is a Breakout-style game for the ZX1, so the objective is to smash a ball at the top of each screen by smashing a ball against it. The ball must be kept in play with the keyboard-controlled paddle at the bottom of the screen and each stage has a different pattern of bricks, some of which will need more than one hit before they're removed.

It's well executed and supports ZX1 hardware for sound, but we found *Batz* to be a little disappointing, there aren't any powerups or enemies so the only variety between stages is the shape of the wall. That doesn't make it a bad game and what's there is fun, but we've probably been spoiled by what *Arkanoid* brought to the table. Adding collectable items or multi-ball would have increased its longevity.

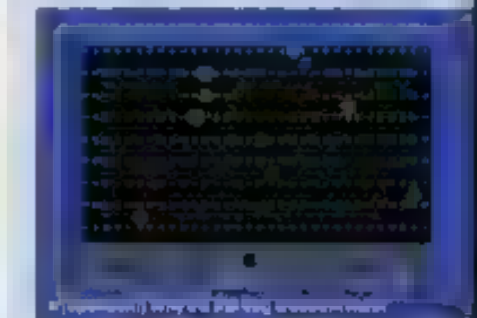


WHAT'S BREWING?

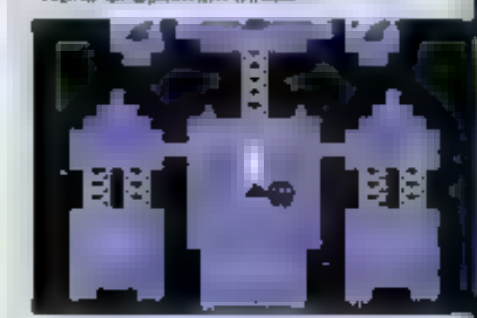
All the latest news from the homebrew community



Breaking The Ice
The original version of Pango variant *Whiskers* was released earlier in the year for the OS and as a cute re-imagining of the ice-pushing and creature-wrestling action game. The developer, Disoriented Studio, has just released a Game Boy Advance conversion and those with the relevant hardware or a decent emulator can pick up a ROM image by pointing their web browser at kikstart.eu/penguin-gba.



Here's one I made earlier
Hot on the heels of *Arcade Game Designer* comes David Hughes' *Classic Game Designer*, a Spectrum game creation tool for building the sort of simple arcade game seen in the early Eighties. The news of CGD arrived a little too late to properly review it for this issue so we will instead give it a piece over next issue. In the meantime, kikstart.eu/ggd-gba/ goes to the appropriate World Of Spectrum thread.



In Space, nobody bats ice cream
We've recently seen the early stages of some scrolling shoot 'em ups for the Texas TI-99/4A and, judging by what the developer has said at Atari Age, these are proof of concept for other projects but may also become a game in their own right. kikstart.eu/ti99-texas/ will whisk visitors over to the relevant Atari Age thread which contains a couple of work-in-progress videos.

HOMEBREW

>> The scene's latest news and reviews

WHAT'S BREWING?

All the latest news from the homebrew community

DEEP, DARK DUNGEONS

Dark Quest is a turn-based role-playing style game with a fantasy theme available from XBLIG. The player, also control of a barbarian who has been asked to save the land from a dark sorcerer and his evil minions and as he quest through dungeons progresses, he'll meet others with a common aim who can be persuaded to join his party. We've given this a quick try and it works pretty well. Fans of fantasy-based RPGs will on Xbox 360 can have a look behind the scenes at www.darkquestxblig.com and give the demo a shot.



WHICH WITCH IS WHICH?

We're not quite sure how old it actually is, the date on the game says 2007, the documentation 2008 but all the screenshots date to our attention reckon this year, but there's a Windows remake of *Cauldron* available. For anyone who hasn't played it, *Cauldron* is about a witch trying to collect ingredients for a spell that will rid the land of an evil pumpkin. The download is at www.cauldron-win.com.



MORE GAMES WE'VE BEEN PLAYING



REFLECTION

DOWNLOAD: WWW.KIKIART.COM/REFLECTOR.html

The objective of *Reflection* is deceptively simple: the player takes control of two avatars, enemies, or position them both, or to their own floor switches to complete a stage. This is far harder than it sounds of course, because both characters are steered with the same control stick, with one inverting any quadrants instructions he receives.

While the controls are minimal, the memorably appear to be at first glance, the buttons are placed differently on each side and variations in the furniture have to be used to reveal where the regular solid and his reflection are in relation to each other. *Reflection* throws the player at the zero-end button a solid, playable puzzle once you've worked out



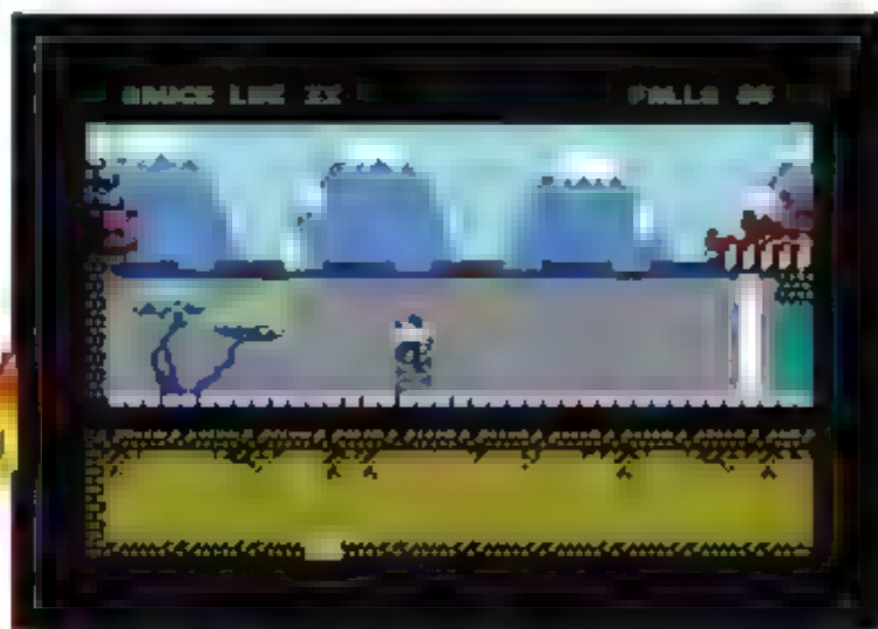
TOY PLANE

DOWNLOAD: WWW.KIKIART.COM/TOYPLANE.html

Toy Plane is a reworking of the helicopter games that were popular a few years back such as *Copter Game*. The controls are very simple, hold A to make the plane accelerate upwards and release A to gracefully pull back down.

While the original game, however, the randomly generated levels have been reduced by designed stages, each with a quota of stars and rings to fly through which unlock the next. The plane will also take a couple of solid impacts against its surroundings before blowing up.

These updates and the graphical reworking make *Toy Plane* a more substantial game and the level layouts are challenging as well.



BRUCE LEE II

DOWNLOAD: WWW.KIKIART.COM/BRUCELEE2.html

Arriving around three decades after the 8-bit version, *Bruce Lee II* takes the gameplay elements of the Datasoft original and creates a different world for Bruce and his enemies to inhabit. The game can be skimmed to look like an Amstrad CPC or Commodore 64-based, the Alan 8-bit does get a look, resembling one of the original platforms, and along with many authentic-looking in-game graphics, developer Bruno R. Marcos has designed some new baddies which fit into the very 8-bit environment. These games appearances include a very tall, career Actor, Jabberwock and a surprisingly easy Chuck Norris.

As with the original game, Bruce must collect artifacts to complete his mission. The newly created screens are devious enough that they'd happily fit into the original, and even if he ignores his assailants completely, there are still a huge number of inconveniently placed obstacles that can exasperate poor Bruce. Sadly, there's no in-game scoring for those hard-fought victories over Chuck and Kareem, so the replay value isn't as high as it could be, but fans of the original should find some amusement in this well-presented homage. And any 8-bit coders are reading, this one's worth considering for conversion.

HOMEBREW HEROES

JONATHAN CAULDWELL HAS BEEN SHARING SOME OF HIS SECRETS AGAIN WITH THE LATEST VERSION OF ARCADE GAME DESIGNER. AGD HAS BEEN AROUND FOR A FEW YEARS, SO WE ASKED HIM ABOUT ITS PAST, PRESENT AND, INDEED, FUTURE.



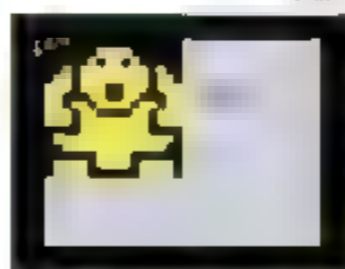
So, to start with, where did *Arcade Game Designer* begin?

It started with the idea early in 2008. It had always seemed a bit at odds in the day-arcade game designers had only let the user change a few aspects of the game such as the graphics, sounds and screen layouts. Those that had offered

more flexibility were slow and very low programs actually produced standalone games at the end of the process. I had already written *Platform Game Designer* and figured I could take some of the principles of that and put them together with basic built-in and more flexible game and let the user determine the logic with a simple scripting language. A few weeks of coding later, I had something I could tentatively show to a few 8-bit enthusiasts who might be interested in producing their own games. So I started a thread over at *World of Spectrum*.

What has shaped it over the years? Is there a community of users offering suggestions?

Yes, there are plenty of users and many of them can be found regularly on the official AGD forums - arcadegamedesigner.proboards.com -



posting posts, reporting bugs or requesting more functionality. I given posts and answer questions there myself. It's a great place for advice on creating games with the tool. Responding to get to hear about problems or requests for features so I can track

down bugs or make other changes to generally improve things. That's how AGD has evolved user input. While there's the subject of the AGD community, an honorable mention must also go to Paul Jenkins and not only for having written several AGD games himself, but for producing a fantastic series of YouTube tutorial videos - and much of the AGD community video content.

AGD has matured over the years, so do you have plans to expand it further?

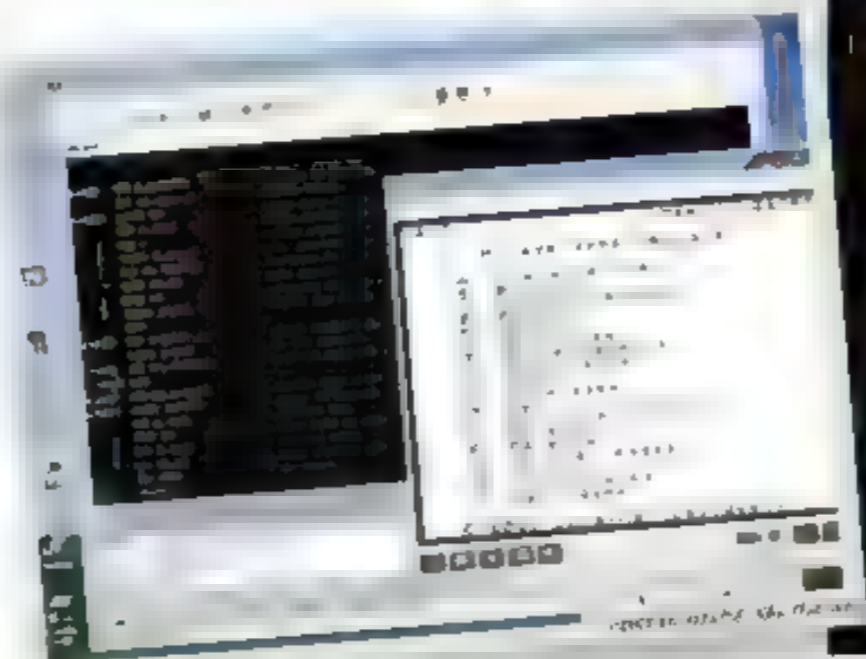
Maybe, but I won't be adding too many new features for a while. I've recently achieved AGD over to the Amstrad CPC and may consider conversions or other platforms. Meanwhile, Tony Thompson has adapted his *Tommy Gun* editor to work with AGD and, ultimately, we'd like to create a multiplatform 8-bit game development tool for the PC. The idea is that users can design the game in a GUI environment that automatically generate emulator files for a number of data machines. However, we would need a lot of more developers to add 6502 or 6809-based machines.

Have there been features that seemed a good idea but didn't work in practice?

I'm not convinced that Kempston Mouse support will be much use, but it was requested by a couple of users so it's still there now. There are several features which haven't been used very often, like the *Easy Mode*, *Night style* menus. Those will remain there for anyone who wants to create arcade adventures. The DIG and F10 commands were hardly ever used, so they've sort of faded out. In AGD 4, it's no longer possible to use all of AGD's features in a single game, so it remains to be seen which new functionality will prove to be the most popular.

Finally, what advice would you give to anybody looking at making their first *Arcade Game Designer* game?

Enjoy yourself! It's designed to be simple to pick up and you don't have to know anything about programming when you begin. Have a play around and see what you can do. Just remember there are six one or two bugs here and there so save your work regularly.



MAIL BAG

Don't forget to follow us online for all the latest retro updates



CONTACT US

STAR LETTER CONSOLE WARS

Dear Retro Gamer,

Videogaming console war potentially on our hands with the Playstation 4 and Xbox One. I wondered what pass-words (or lack of a better term) were the PS4 only 25% so when... was a kid. I don't really understand that there was a difference between the Master System and NES or the Mega Drive and SNES - I just loved playing games. I thought it would be interesting to find out if the whole 'fanboy' thing has been going on for years, or if it has only been since the rise of the internet and social media.

When did everyone stop appreciating these systems for what they are and become so narrow-minded?

Also, your piece on *Mystr* was excellent and took me back to playing *River* in my Saturn, says which... recently dug out amongst others - I've attached some pics (can you believe the prices?)

I've always loved the magazine guys - keep up the good work. Cheers,

Unfortunately Chris, console and computer wars have been raging forever. Darran would routinely get into arguments about why the Amstrad CPC 464 was better than the Commodore 64 and Spectrum, and this continued as newer systems came out. Even today it's still raging, and you've only got to visit popular forums to see that some people just can't move on. Maybe we'll do a feature on it at a later date.



Every month, one lucky reader will receive a copy of our latest eMag **Retro Gamer Load 3**, a bargain if ever there was one. All you have to do is present a lucid, thought-provoking piece of literature that meets our souls. Fearing that, something funny with swear words or something *Strider* related will go down just as well.

outs was to sneak into our brother's room and change all his cassette tapes so they were all in the wrong boxes. We got up to other shenanigans but they're not really suitable for print.

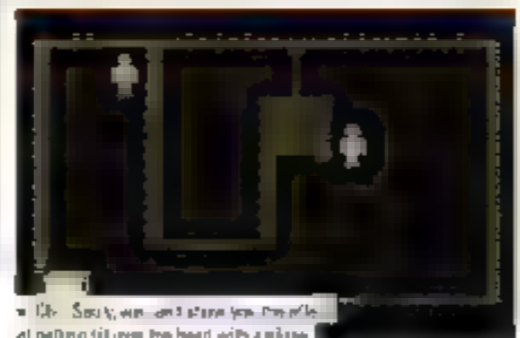
Hi Retro Gamer,

The other week I went to a car boot. It's getting a little warmer now because most puners want to charge silly prices because that's how much it is on eBay. Anyway, I was mooching around seeing the normal ridiculous prices... a £50 NES here, a £40 PlayStation there... when I found a boxed stuffed with Sega Saturn games.

Flicking through the collection I immediately saw a copy of *Panzer Dragon*. It was missing the outer sleeve, but I knew it was worth money. Both parts of the game were being sold separately at £5 each (they clearly didn't know it was the same game).

As I paid the money to the old woman who clearly wasn't the original owner of the game, she burst out "could not have both for a fiver? They're actually one game." She happily agreed, leaving me alone with my shame. Does anyone else have a similar tale of self-baiting that they'd like to share? Dear Saunders.

Don't beat yourself up too much Dean. While you should be scolded for pulling the wool over someone's eyes like that, we're sure you're not the only reader to have done something like this in the past. Darran once bought *Baldur's Gate* from a charity shop for 50 pence because the woman selling it thought it was a DVD film and not a £5 game. What a cad.



Chris, we don't share you the idea of getting hit over the head with a pillow.

HEAD IT CHECK

Dear Retro Gamer, I have a story to tell you. Back when I was young and used to play on my C64 - especially at night when I was completely engrossed in a game - my brother would come up behind me, quietly in the dark and whack me as hard as he could across the head with a pillow. I'm sure you know this was something of a shocking experience, especially whilst trading sublimely through the lower bunkers in *Castle Wolfenstein*. I'd just used to get him back though, please don't think I was a wimp. When it was his turn to play, I would do the same and sneak up behind him, usually around midnight, and whack him hard across the head with my Year 7 Maths Primer book, which was about 850 pages long. That usually did the trick.

Thanks so much for all the tremendously wonderful work.

There's nothing like sibling rivalry is there? One particular favourite trick of



Sega Saturn Panzer Dragon Sega Saturn Software Release 1994 and it's for the price.

Hello guys, I've just got hold of a copy of the latest magazine (don't blame me, a wedding got in the way of my picking it up last week) and I felt like I needed to say something specifically to Ian Lee regarding his column. My younger brother who is the same age as Ben, not only knows why cassettes are linked with videogames, but also used to light me to play some of said cassette-tape videogames on our Commodore 64. Many happy and fight-filled summer holidays were broken up by a game finally loading, or by either one of us mocking the loading screens with their dancing rainbows and flying arrows. Fear not Ian - some of the young know their stuff!

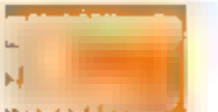
That's good to hear Bekky, although it does concern us how little knowledge there does seem to be of gaming's past. We hear plenty of comments at work, on forums or at home that instantly remind us of how old we are. One such comment was from someone who didn't know who *Strider* was. What a terrible world that must be to live in.



Also there's one 24 year old who kept getting into arguments about NES prices. Let us show you a few bits of history.

Good afternoon Darran I was wondering if you have published an issue with a feature for the Sega Mega CD or 2? If so, what was the issue number and is it still available? If not, will you republish it in the future? Kind Regards,

Unfortunately Martin, the issue in question (Issue 61), is long out of stock, meaning you'll have to head online or wait for our next bookazine. It's a cracking machine and worth a look if you don't already own one.



Space Hulk This month Darran has been writing on about *Space Hulk*, as it's just been released in digital form on PC and Mac. He certainly loved it over in the office with sales of his NES edition of the game which is still selling well in the box. We can't decide whether to play it or sell it for a fortune.

THE ONES THAT GOT AWAY...

Darran discusses the covers that didn't quite make it



BIFFER'S GUIDE TO BEAT-EM-UPS This was an early option that didn't really get off the drawing board. The art was to create a fighter's select screen like you'd get in a game, but it would feature fighters from lots of different franchises. It was a nice idea, but we used too few characters to flesh it out and it ended up looking a little messy.



EARTHWORM JIM I have a lot of fantastic hand-drawn art for *Earthworm Jim*, and we felt it would be a great focus for a cover. The idea was to use a blurred version of James as a focal point with *Strider* in the background to give the impression of a top-down. Unfortunately we couldn't find a suitable dramatic angle for the then hit.

From the forum

www.retrogamernet/forum

Every month, Retro Gamer asks a question on the forum and prints the best replies. This month we wanted to know:

Your favourite fighting games

Hero

As a fan of the great, but mostly forgotten *Fighters Spirit* for the Amiga, huge, well-animated characters, beautiful backgrounds, it's definitely a contender for a top videogame of the glorious AGA-chest.

Antbird2007

Available for five purchase hours and remains the ultimate game. I'd probably have bought the arcade cabinet. Naturally I'm also a big fan of *Way Of The Exploding Fist* which was the first home computer game with the music of *Kanaka Champ*.

ndt

At the Amiga you don't need all this 3D nonsense to deliver pugilistic perfection, they got it right in 1988 and it still hasn't been bettered, in my opinion. Hence it's not just boring but pugilistic perfection just sounds so good.

RetroBob

As a fan of the great, but mostly forgotten *Fighters Spirit* for the Amiga, huge, well-animated characters, beautiful backgrounds, it's definitely a contender for a top videogame of the glorious AGA-chest.

Liam1882

Right? *Mystr* was the original, the reason they were everything really. Rock solid AM2 fighting mechanics, but being able to fight as the PlayStation character against whatever the 4000 was. Yes please!

Hrtman_MalStep

It was a bit of a fighter for me, but other than the Mega Drive versions, but being able to fight as the PlayStation character against whatever the 4000 was. Yes please!

Meganiner

It was a bit of a fighter for me, but other than the Mega Drive versions, but being able to fight as the PlayStation character against whatever the 4000 was. Yes please!

HalcypodDere00

It was a bit of a fighter for me, but other than the Mega Drive versions, but being able to fight as the PlayStation character against whatever the 4000 was. Yes please!

Dave300

It was a bit of a fighter for me, but other than the Mega Drive versions, but being able to fight as the PlayStation character against whatever the 4000 was. Yes please!

RETRO GAMER

Imagine Publishing Ltd
Richmond House, 33 Richmond Hill,
Bournemouth, Dorset BH2 6EJ
+44 (0) 1202 586200
Web: www.imaginepublishing.co.uk
www.retrogamermag.com
www.gsnidgimags.com

Editor Darran Jones
Editor in Chief Nick Roberts
Senior Designer Jonathan Wells
Sub Editor Stephen Holmes
Photographer James Sheppard
Senior Art Editor Andy Downes
Head of Publishing Aaron Aspell
Head of Design Ross Andrews

Digital content and access to premium archive available on our website at www.retrogamermag.com

Printed on 100% recycled paper with vegetable based inks. Contains information on how to recycle. Printed in the UK by Walsley Printers Ltd.

Head of Sales & Marketing Gail Lambert
Production Director Andy Stretton
Distribution Director Stephen Burt
Creative Director Mark Hinch

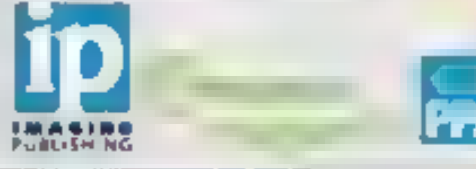
Printed by Walsley Printers Ltd, Bournemouth, Dorset BH2 6EJ

Subscription Director Stephen Burt
Production Director Andy Stretton
Distribution Director Stephen Burt
Creative Director Mark Hinch

Printed by Walsley Printers Ltd, Bournemouth, Dorset BH2 6EJ

Subscription Director Stephen Burt
Production Director Andy Stretton
Distribution Director Stephen Burt
Creative Director Mark Hinch

Subscription Director Stephen Burt
Production Director Andy Stretton
Distribution Director Stephen Burt
Creative Director Mark Hinch



Welcome back to the golden age



RETRO COLLECTIONS

Revisit the games, films, shows and hardware that defined entertainment for a generation

BUY YOUR COPY TODAY

Print edition available at www.imagineshop.co.uk

Digital edition available at www.greatdigitalmags.com

Available on the following platforms



[facebook.com/ImagineBookazines](https://www.facebook.com/ImagineBookazines) twitter.com/Books_Imagine

retro
GAMER

nextmonth

» LOAD 121

ON SALE 10 OCTOBER 2013

THE LEGEND OF ZELDA[®]
the Wind Waker

As a high-definition remake sets sail, we speak to the creators of Link's most ambitious GameCube adventure

Compilation Kings
■ Discover the creation of the 8-bit compilation and how it turned into an essential part of any gamer's library

Nigel Alderton
■ The creator of *Chuckie Egg* celebrates its 30th anniversary and looks back at his successful coding career

Also inside...
• *Command & Conquer: Red Alert* • 3DO • *Bombuzal*
• *Total 2* • Atari 7800 • *Gribbly's Day Out*

Rambo Special
■ Martyn Carroll speaks to the developers behind some of gaming's best *Rambo* adaptations





CHILLOUT GAMES

we value your games

www.chilloutgames.co.uk/SellGames.aspx

review centre



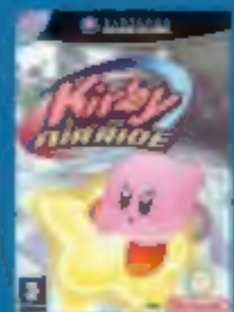
We Pay:



£48.47



£30.95



£17.91

**-RAPID PAYMENT
-GREAT PRICES
-TRUSTWORTHY**



£32.53



£17.51



£15.27



Prices valid as at 14th September 2013. Prices subject to change on a daily basis. Chillout Games and retro-games.co.uk are trading names of Chillout Games Ltd. Prices are for shop credit - 12% more than PayPal. T&Cs at www.chilloutgames.co.uk

f /RETROGAMEBASE

t /RETRO_GAME_BASE



RETRO GAME BASE

WE HAVE JUST SIGNED A 5 YEAR LEASE!

LONDON'S ONLY DEDICATED
RETRO GAME STORE IS HERE TO STAY!

MORE STOCK THAN EVER BEFORE!



WWW.RETROGAMEBASE.CO.UK

430 STREATHAM HIGH ROAD, LONDON, SW16 3PX
0203 489 6146 | SHOP@RETROGAMEBASE.CO.UK

FREE UK DELIVERY

retro gaming cables

Manufacturers of quality audio video cables for vintage gaming machines

RGB SCART cable Key Features:

- Vast improvement over traditional RF
- Pixel clear RGB video
- Improved sound quality
- No more tuning
- SCART TV plug & play
- Compatible with upscaling units

We also stock a wide range of video adapters including RGBS SCART to BNC break-out cables and EuroSCART to Japanese SCART converters.

RGB SCARTS available for:

- Sega Mega Drive 1 & 2
- SNK Neo Geo AES & CD/CDZ
- BBC Acorn Micro
- Sinclair ZX Spectrum + 128k, +2 & QL
- Atari STF, STE & STFM
- Amstrad CPC 464
- Various Arcade Jamma Superguns (Sigma, Pana, CMVS etc)

Plus many more on our website



www.retrogamingcables.co.uk | Professional Engineering

To Advertise In

retro GAMER

Contact Anthony Godsell
on 01202 586420

anthony.godsell@imagine-publishing.co.uk

MUTANT CATERPILLAR GAMES

... SINCLAIR ... COMMODORE ... ACORN ...

MACHINES

HARDWARE

SOFTWARE

REPAIRS

10% OFF "retrogc1"

your first order when you use discount code

ALL OUR STOCK IS TESTED, WORKING AND GUARANTEED

FREE UK inland postage - excellent international postage rates

www: www.mutant-caterpillar.co.uk email: sales@mutant-caterpillar.co.uk
ebay: mutant-caterpillar tel: 01970 625441

... AMSTRAD ... ATARI ... ANYTHING ELSE!

ENDGAME



SUPER MARIO RPG: LEGEND OF THE SEVEN STARS

» Just before it bugged off and neglected Nintendo consoles for an entire generation, Squaresoft chucked Mario into his first RPG and, in doing so, made Legend Of The Seven Stars the Super Nintendo's final Mario title. It was a peach of a game from the makers of the epic Final Fantasy series, and gamers fell head over heels for the isometric witty madness of it all



01

» The final star has been collected and the Star Road is complete. Geno has said goodbye. Now it's time to inspire the intro makers of Stars In Their Eyes with some whizzy star-like schmaltz. Tonight Matthew, Mario is going to be stunned.



02

» An eternity passes as the stars shoot into the sky, leaving a solitary twinkle in their wake. The sword Exor dissolves and blows into the wind. Mario and his gang are rooted to the spot for the entire night in utter awe at this natural phenomenon.



03

» They think it's all over – not yet it ain't. Like an Oasis record, it just can't end so cue some "closure" as we discover the fates of our friends. Mallow is crowned the prince of Nimbus Land. Who'd have thought it?



04

» Bowser repairs his keep. Jonathan Jones eyes the sunset alone. Croco races the Mushroom Derby against Yoshi and Frogglucius and his students go to Toadofsky's top gig. Valentina and Booster get married. Bumbling Dodo is confused when Booster darts off, leaving Valentina in hot, passionate, spurned pursuit.



05

» Not to worry, villains can't commit anyway. But look at Mario and Princess Peach – they're well happy. Peach is a latter day Kate with her little waves, but Mario sticks two fingers up. Or maybe it's a sign of peace. Who knows? The loveable scamp. With a wink, he's gone. Cue a parade of characters.

GAMESEEK

WWW.GAMESEEK.CO.UK

PS4 ONLY £339.75 | Xbox One £419.75



EXCLUSIVE OFFER FOR YOU!

FREE £2
£2 OFF NEXT ORDER

Enter Code **RETRO** at checkout.
Minimum Spend £10. Offer Expires 12/10/13

VISIT **GAMESEEK.CO.UK**

Order Your
Xbox One &
PS4 Now

nectar

and now...
COLLECT NECTAR POINTS
WITH EVERY PURCHASE

WWW.GAMESEEK.CO.UK

THE UK'S SPECIALIST VIDEO GAMING MEGASTORE

The world's first endless action RPG

Slayman

"just plain exceptionally good"

★★★★★ 148 Apps

"Give this a shot immediately"

9/10 Destructoid

"absolutely top-notch virtual controls"

★★★★★ toucharcade



Available on the
App Store



FDG
ENTERTAINMENT



Pixel Licker LLC